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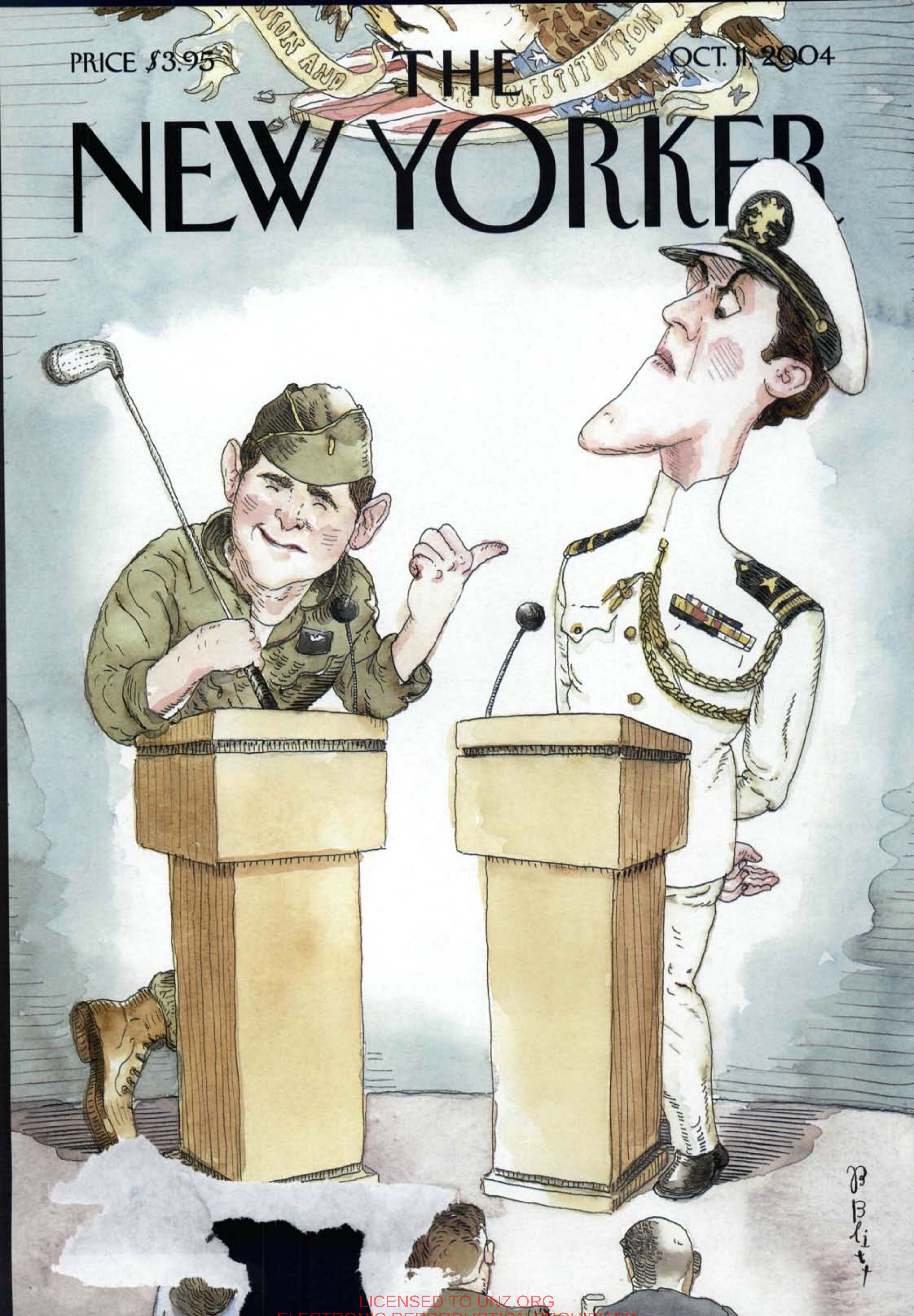
THE NEW YORKER

OCT. 11, 2004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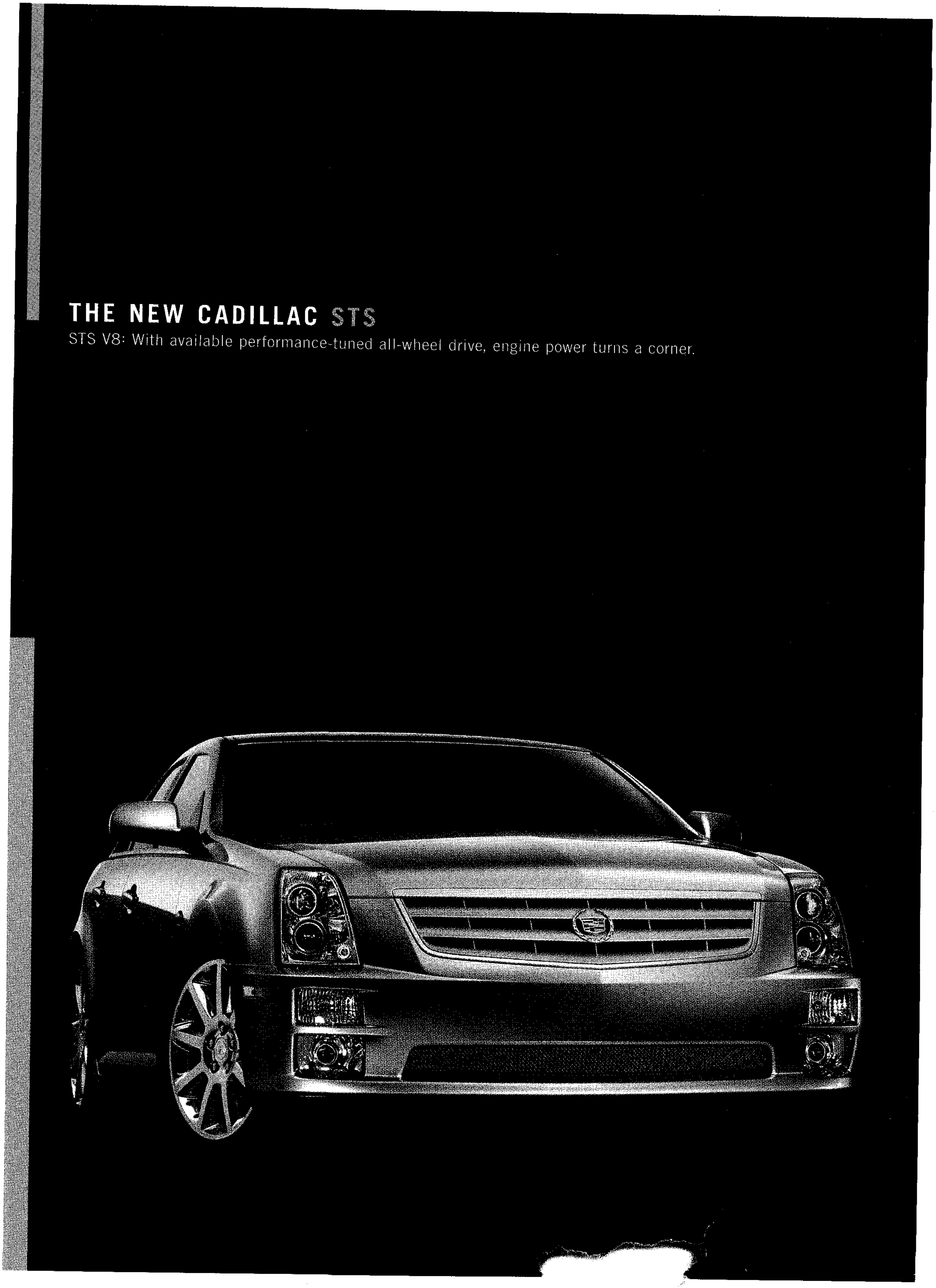
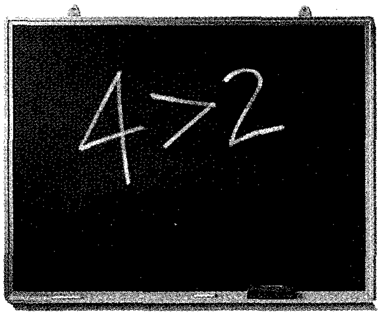

THE NEW CADILLAC STS
STS V8: With available performance-tuned all-wheel drive, engine power turns a corner.

While elementary, the notion that

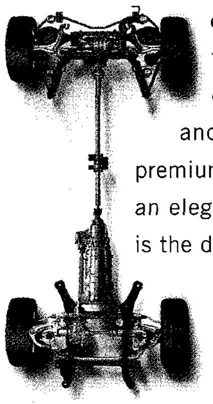
FOUR IS GREATER THAN TWO

has led to a better performing vehicle.

The appeal of having a 320-hp 4.6L Northstar V8 VVT driving *all four wheels* would seem obvious enough. It is generally acknowledged that all-wheel drive translates into all-weather, all-road capability. But the new Cadillac STS is, first and foremost, a *performance* vehicle, and performance drivers are attached to the more traditional rear-wheel-drive configuration, for reasons more compelling than nostalgia. Having the front wheels steer while the rear wheels generate forward thrust produces perhaps the most thrilling aspect of performance driving—accelerating out of a corner, using the throttle to shape your exit line. How might one craft an all-wheel-drive system that would satisfy the performance driver?

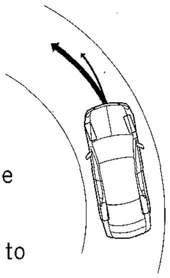


Available on STS V8, the Cadillac performance-tuned AWD system makes extensive use of aluminum to enhance vehicle capability without adding excessive weight. Care was taken in the design, selection, and mounting of components to minimize noise and vibration, thus preserving a premium ride experience. It is in every way an elegant system, but its primary focus is the delivery of *power*—to all four wheels.



But during cornering, particularly during *aggressive* cornering, all four wheels will seldom find exactly the same degree of traction, thus opening the door to wheel spin and the subsequent loss of power and control. We close that door with the STS chassis control system, which integrates the control strategies of the engine, transmission, ABS, traction control, and the StabiliTrak stability enhancement system to minimize wheel slip and to help keep STS moving in the direction the driver intends.

But what the performance driver will note is that engineers have given the AWD system in STS a 40/60 front-to-rear torque split, meaning that 60 percent of engine output is directed toward the rear wheels. Just enough, it turns out, to make STS with AWD feel more rear-wheel-drive-like when power is applied in corners.



Toe the throttle coming out of a corner, and *everything*—lightweight components, sophisticated controls, and 60 percent of driving force directed to the rear wheels—comes seamlessly into play. Being "on rails" is far too passive a metaphor. You might well call the experience thrilling. For performance, four is greater than two. Cadillac STS V6 starting at $40,995.*

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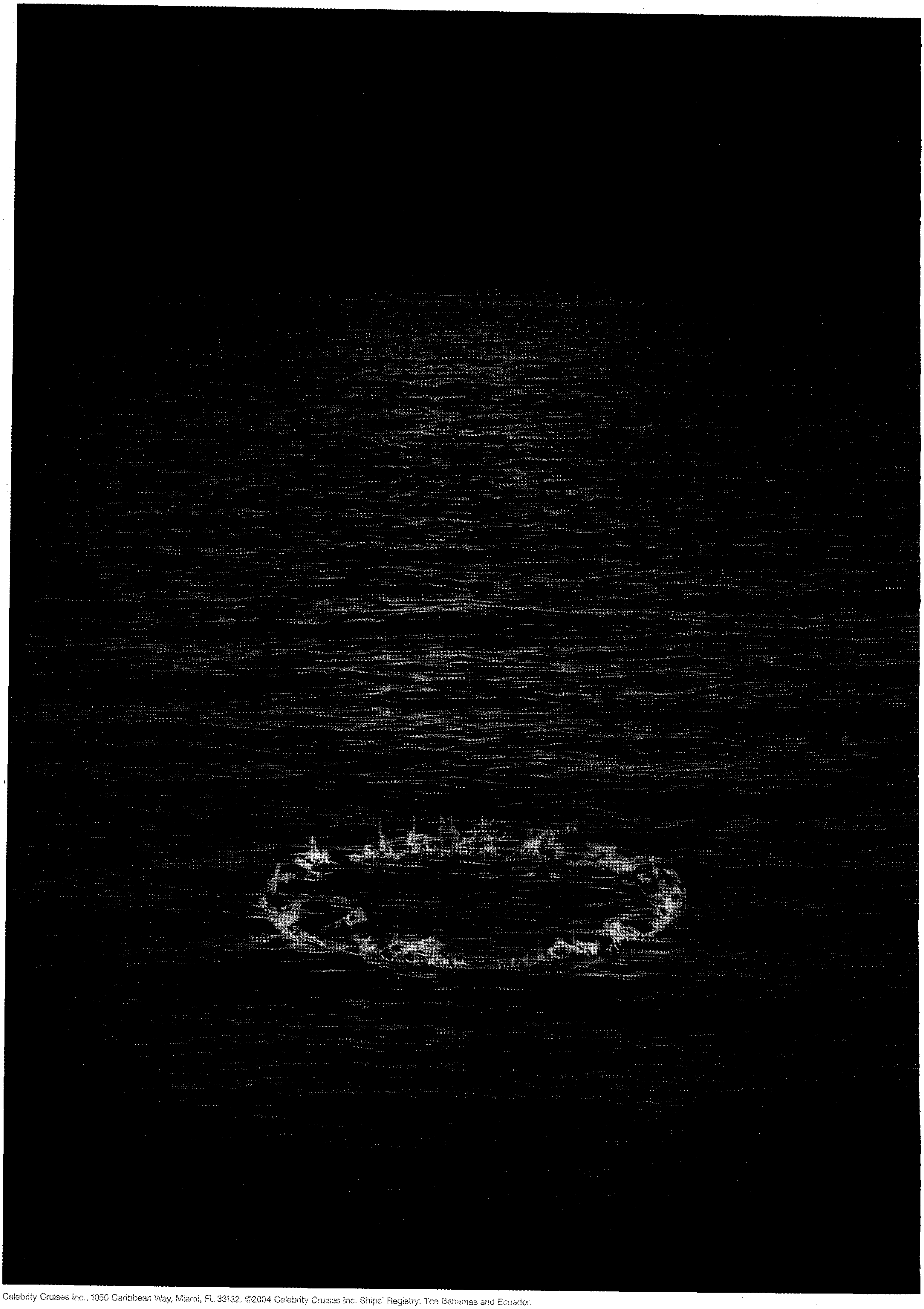

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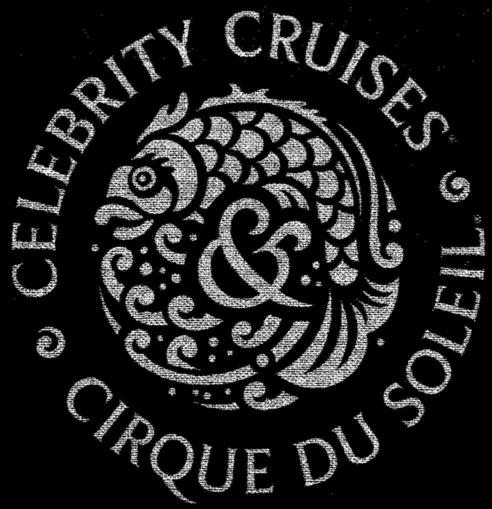
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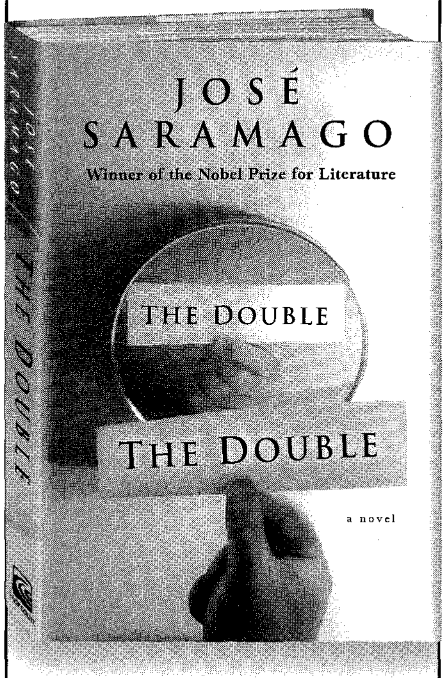

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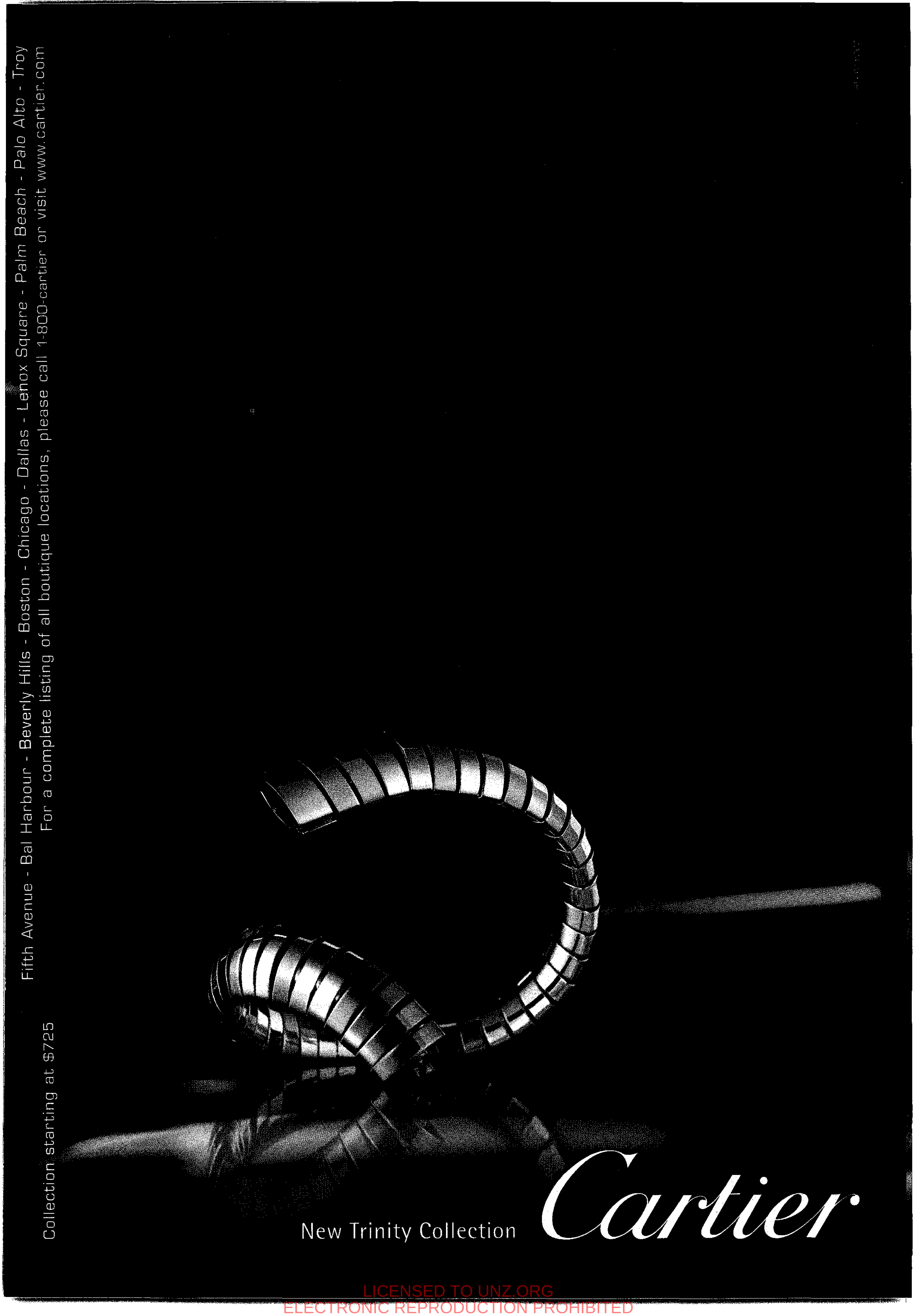

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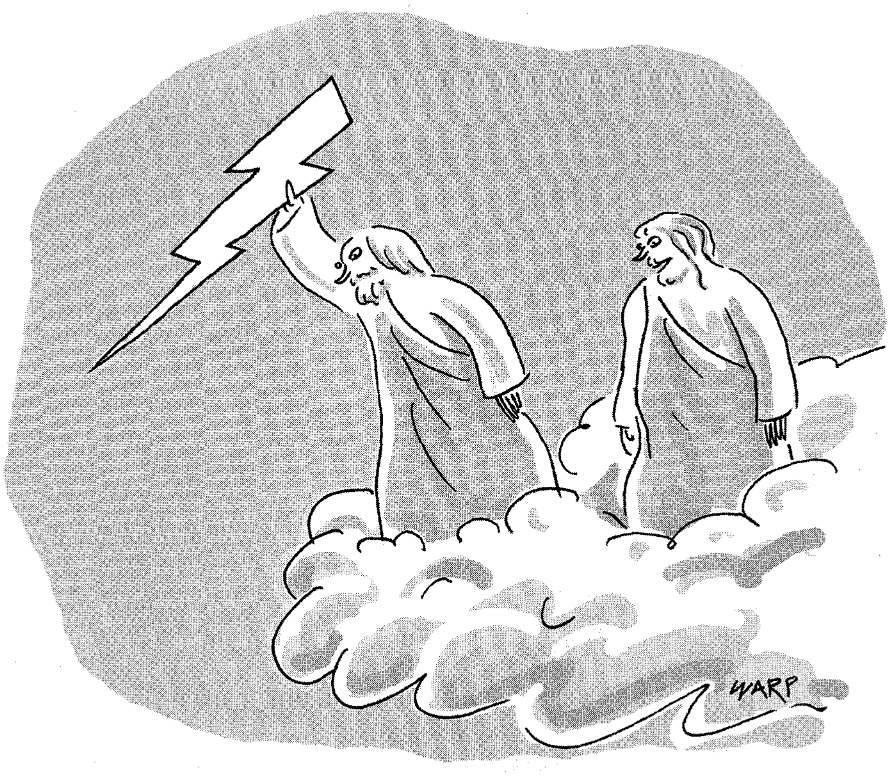
Barry Blitt (Cover) is working on illustrations for several projects, including a children's book.

Gerald Scarfe (The Back Page, p.104) is a regular contributor to the magazine. His latest book is "Heroes & Villains." ♦



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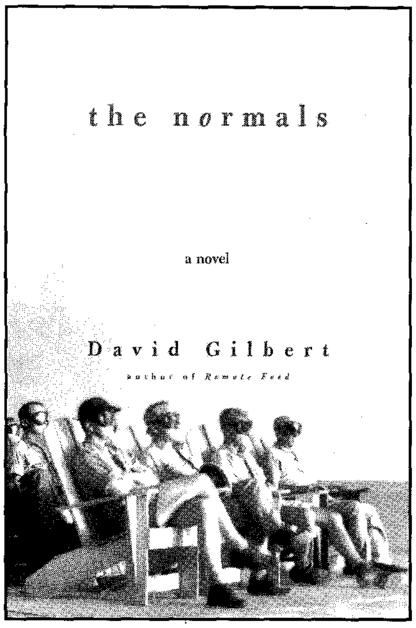

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THE PERSONALITY TOUCH

As the co-author of the current edition of the "M.B.T.I. Manual," I take issue with Malcolm Gladwell's article on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator ("Personality Plus," September 20th). Gladwell does little to distinguish between its appropriate use and its misuse. The M.B.T.I. elicits a person's *preference* (not skill or ability) for one of each choice in four pairs of opposite, but equally healthy, ways of using our minds. I am most comfortable when I use Intuition, but I use Sensing when I need to—for example, when preparing a financial statement. Indeed, type theory asserts that all eight parts are necessary to adaptively conduct our lives. Isabel Myers called her instrument an "indicator" and not a "test"; she constructed it to "indicate" one's likely type but knew that personality is too complex for any set of questions to be accurate all the time. For years, Myers was reluctant to publish it for fear that it would be misused. Gladwell's article confirms that fear.
Naomi L. Quenk
Albuquerque, N.M.

My organization has used the M.B.T.I. for five years. The first thing we learned was that it is not to be used in hiring, evaluations, or work assignments. But it is a modestly accurate tool for understanding how colleagues think and how they use information. Knowing our profiles, we can tailor our communications. As a T (Thinker) managing a department of Fs (Feelers), I've learned to slow down and emphasize the emotional aspects of my decisions. When my colleagues bring me ideas, they know that I will focus on logic, and prepare accordingly. The M.B.T.I., while not perfect, is more valuable than Gladwell suggests.
Seth Morrison
Arlington, Va.

Gladwell describes the Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T.) as "developed in the nineteen-thirties by Henry Murray"—and, indeed, it contributed to Murray's reputation as "one of the most influential psychologists of the twentieth century." However, as has been the case in many areas of human endeavor, credit here (and in many introductory psychology textbooks) has been given to a prominent man rather than to the women who did the creative work. In 1985, near the end of his life, Murray wrote the following to the Radcliffe newsletter: "The germinal suggestion" came "from an unusually apperceptive student in abnormal psychology at Radcliffe, Mrs. Cecilia Roberts (later Mrs. Crane Brinton, still later Mrs. Walter Bogner)," and in the next phase "Christiana Morgan had the main role. When the first article announcing the new method was written, her name was placed first, but when she found that the ensuing mail was consequently all directed to her, she asked that her name be officially omitted thereafter." One has to wonder about the gender dynamics behind this decision. It is certainly time that these women be recognized.
Phyllis Bronstein
Professor of Psychology Emerita
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vt.

EDITORS' NOTE: Hendrik Hertzberg's September 6th Comment included an incorrect figure (seventy-five) for the percentage of men killed or wounded performing the same Swift-boat duty as John Kerry. The source for the number was "Tour of Duty," by Douglas Brinkley, who attributed it to Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. In his own book "On Watch," however, Zumwalt refers to six per cent monthly casualties for a short, particularly dangerous period in the war, and notes, correctly, that the annualized casualty rate for that period would have been just over fifty per cent. But in interviews Zumwalt often mistakenly calculated it to be "about seventy-five per cent."

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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GEORGIA

Kikuo Morimoto
Revitalize rural Cambodia by preserving traditional silk fabrication.
CAMBODIA

Teresa Manera
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ARGENTINA

Lonnie Dupre
Undertake the first summer crossing of the Arctic Ocean.
ARCTIC OCEAN

There are only 1,500 Przewalski horses alive today. Rolex Awards for Enterprise Laureate and equine expert Claudia Feh believes that the breed's best chance of survival is to live naturally, in the wild. She plans to establish a reintroduction site in remote Western Mongolia, with a multidisciplinary learning center, the Wild Horse Mesh, where local nomads and international scientists will exchange knowledge. She is one of the 2004 Rolex Laureates – five men and women whose groundbreaking endeavors have been selected by a panel of distinguished judges for their potential to expand human knowledge or improve the lot of mankind.

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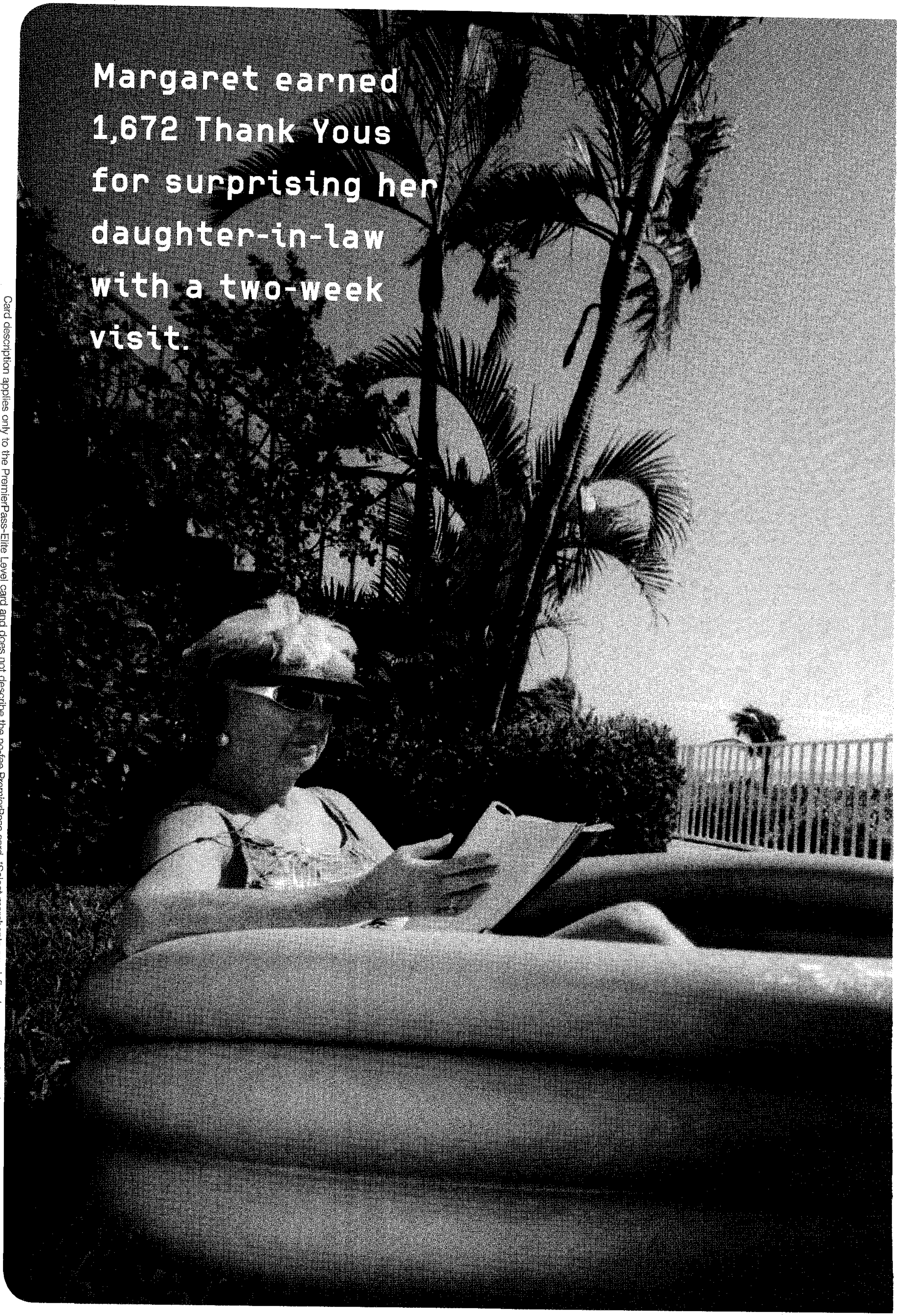
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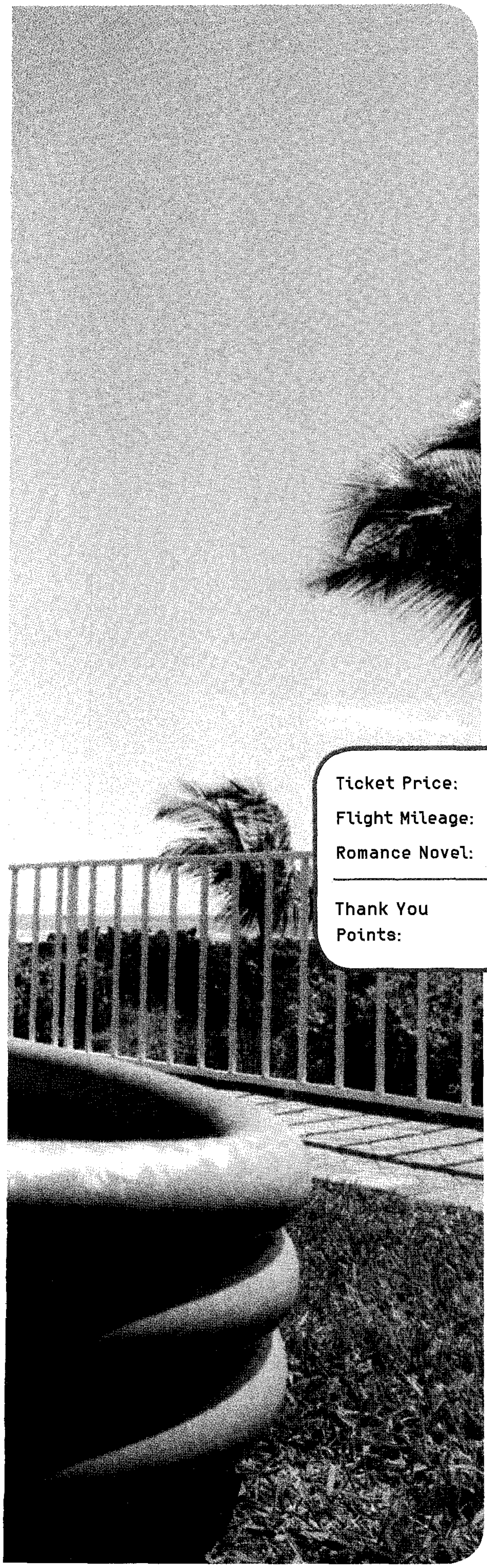

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THIS WEEK
SUNNY OUTLOOK

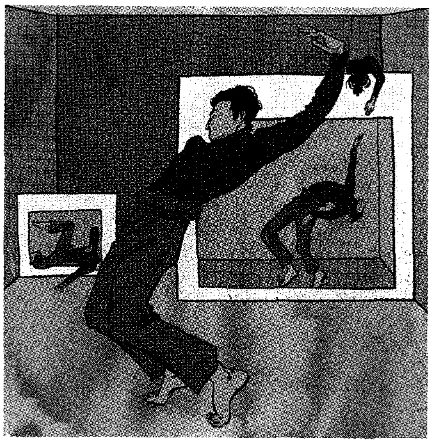
After suffering one of rock music's most highly publicized breakdowns, Brian Wilson, the former leader of the Beach Boys, has quietly pieced his life back together, and now he's making good on his musical legacy. In recent years, his energies have been divided between releasing mediocre new albums and restaging his classic sixties records. A set of 2002 London performances of "Pet Sounds" were revelatory—the older, more fragile Wilson put across the songs with greater emotional depth. Now he's touring with a rebuilt version of his lost song suite, "Smile," which includes "Heroes and Villains" and "Surf's Up." (Carnegie Hall, Oct. 12-13; see Night Life.)

FASHIONABLE DANCE

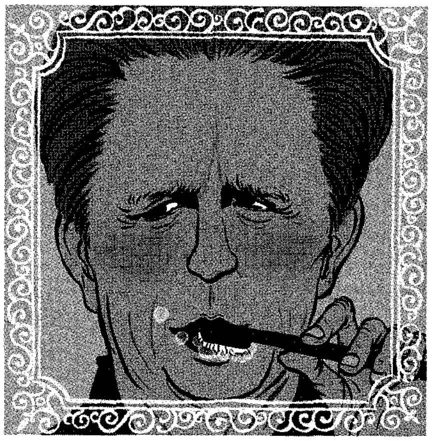
The Berlin native Johannes Wieland and his sexy young company perform four works, both new and from the repertory, at Diane von Furstenberg's downtown atelier, wearing costumes made by von Furstenberg and other designers. The pieces showcase Wieland's passion for the abstract. Partners brace against each other at unexpected points, stomach to stomach, head to neck. Wieland also toys with sexuality and gender: the women are impassive even when caressed, and male-female pairs are physically matched. In the quintet "Parietal Region," the dancers, in Bauhaus-influenced costumes, move among white boxes that represent a part of the brain that deals with perception and memory. (Oct. 7-10; see Dance.)

THE MOVIE MEMOIR

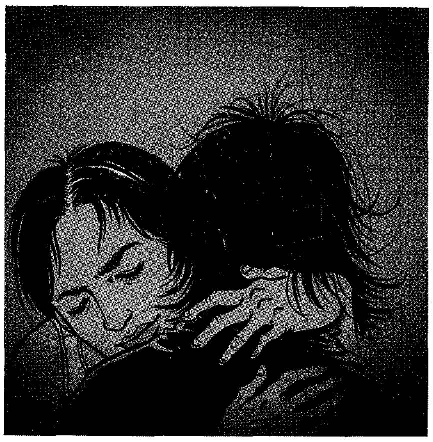
A year ago, Jonathan Caouette's "Tarnation" was an iMovie file on his Macintosh. The finished work—a montage of pop songs, home movies, and memories of his mentally ill mother and his own cross-dressing—caught the attention of John Cameron Mitchell and Gus Van Sant. With their help, Caouette reached the big screen; "Tarnation" seems a harbinger of intensely personal films to come. (Film Forum, starting Oct. 6; see Movies.)



The Johannes Wieland dance troupe, costumed by Diane von Furstenberg.

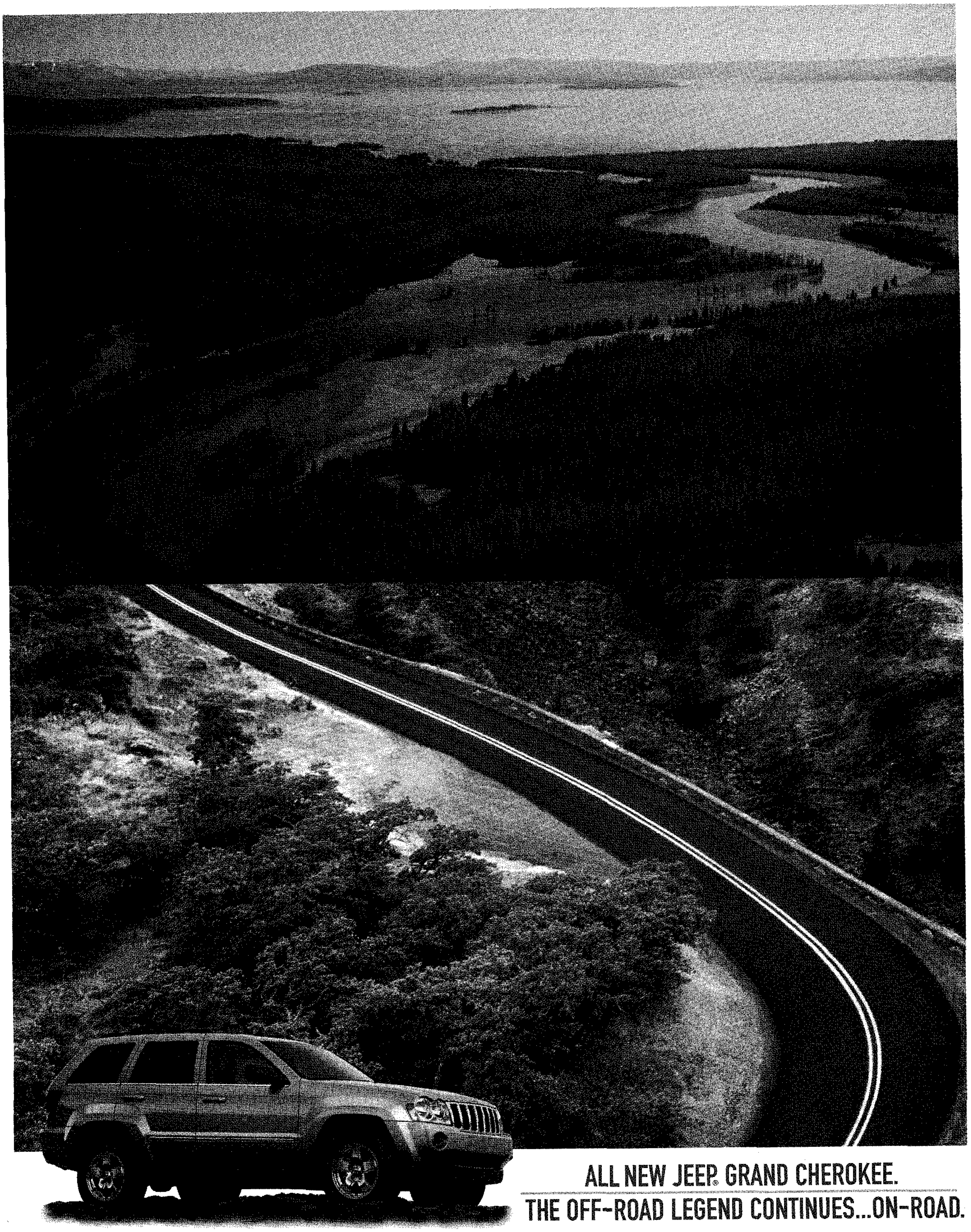


Brian Wilson brushes up on his lost sixties classic, "Smile," at Carnegie Hall.



YUKO SHIMIZU

Jonathan Caouette's autobiographical film, "Tarnation," at Film Forum.



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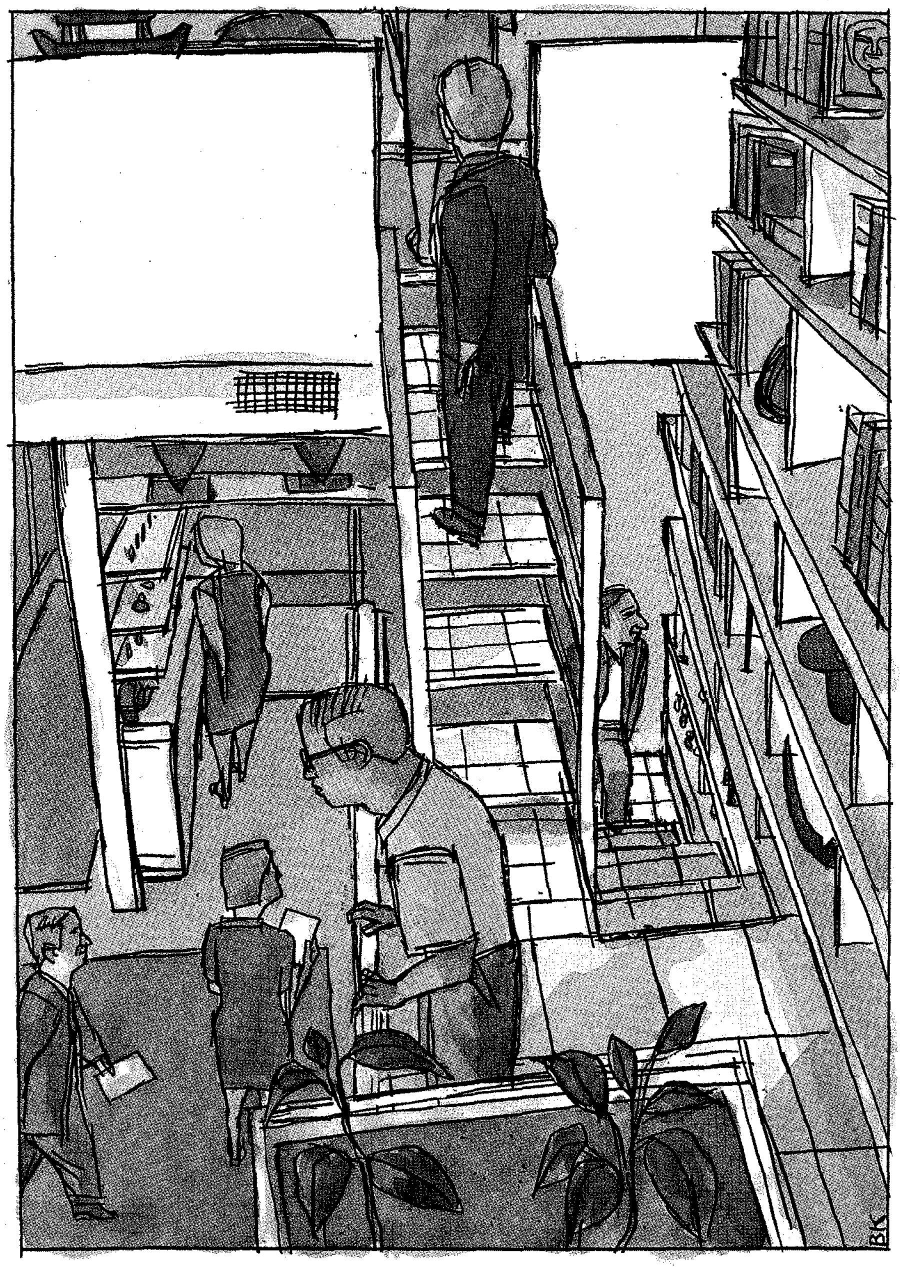

The "Open House New York" weekend offers a chance to look inside many notable buildings, including Paul Rudolph's modern town house (see Above and Beyond).

BEN KATCHOR

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ACHARNIANS
Aristophanes' political satire about a citizen who tries to stop a war stars Amos Crawley and Liat Ron. Translated by Douglass Parker and directed by Gregory Simmons. Opens Oct. 7 at 8. (Theatre Three, 311 W. 43rd St., 3rd fl. 212-868-4444.)

BROOKLYN: THE MUSICAL
A young *Parisienne* named Brooklyn seeks fame and her long-lost father, in a new musical set in the heroine's namesake borough. Book, music, and lyrics by Mark Schoenfeld and Barri McPherson. Directed by Jeff Calhoun. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

DIRTY TRICKS
A new play about Martha Mitchell (Judith Ivey), the outspoken wife of Nixon's attorney general, John Mitchell, who blabbed to the press during Watergate. Written by John Jeter and directed by Margaret Whitton, with sets by Neil Patel. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

GOOD SAMARITANS
A rehab counselor (Rosemary Allen) and a patient (Kevin Hurley) strike up an unusual friendship in a new play by the avant-garde writer, director, and composer Richard Maxwell. Previews begin Oct. 6. Opens Oct. 8 at 8. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

HECUBA
The actress and acting teacher Kristin Linklater plays Priam's widow, and Heather Tom is her daughter Polyxena, in a new production of Euripides' tragedy, translated by William Arrowsmith. With an original score by Allison Leyton-Brown and Kaveh Nabatian, performed live. Directed by Alex Lippard. Previews begin Oct. 7. Opens Oct. 10 at 7. (45 Below, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101.)

LAST EASTER
M.C.C. presents a new play by Bryony Lavery ("Frozen"), about three people who take a terminally ill friend to Texas and Lourdes in search of a cure. Directed by Doug Hughes. One preview on Oct. 6. Opens Oct. 7 at 7. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

LYSISTRATA
The National Theatre of Greece brings its production of Aristophanes' play, which was presented at the Olympics this summer, to City Center for a week of performances. With Lydia Koniordou in the title role. In Greek, with English supertitles. Directed by Kostas Tsianos. Oct. 6-10. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

NINE PARTS OF DESIRE
A play by the Iraqi-American playwright Heather Raffo is the season opener for Manhattan Ensemble Theatre. It's about the lives of Iraqi women, and is based on eleven years of research and interviews. Directed by Joanna Settle. In previews. Opens Oct. 9 at 8. (55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.)

RECKLESS
Manhattan Theatre Club and Second Stage present the Broadway première of Craig Lucas's 1983 play, about a woman who flees when she learns her husband has taken out a hit on her. Starring Mary-Louise Parker and Rosie Perez. Directed by Mark Brokaw. In previews. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

RICHARD III
Peter Dinklage plays the King in the Public's season opener. Directed by Peter DuBois. In previews. Opens Oct. 10 at 6:45. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

ROMEO & JULIET
The Cocteau Repertory presents a ninety-minute update, adapted and directed by Rod McLucas, which stars David Ledoux and Kristina Klebe. Previews begin Oct. 8. (The play runs in repertory with the musical comedy "Dames at Sea.") (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 212-279-4200.)

SPATTER PATTERN
A screenwriter (Peter Frechette) gets involved in the troubles of a college professor (Darren Pettie) who's under investigation for murder, in a new play by Neal Bell, directed by Michael Greif. In previews. Opens Oct. 10 at 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

TRYING
A play by Joanna McClelland Glass based on the twilight years of Francis Biddle (Fritz Weaver), an F.D.R.-era attorney general and a judge at the Nuremberg trials, who has a battle of wills with the young secretary (Kati Brazda) his wife has hired to put his office in order. Directed by Sandy Shinner. In previews. (Promenade Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

TWELVE ANGRY MEN
Philip Bosco, Larry Bryggman, Boyd Gaines, and nine others appear in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Reginald Rose's fifties jury drama. Directed by Scott Ellis. In previews. (American Airlines, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

WHITE CHOCOLATE
In a satirical play by the longtime *New Yorker* cartoonist William Hamilton, a white Park Avenue couple wake up and discover they've become black. Reg E. Cathey, Julie Halston, and Lynn Whitfield lead the cast. Directed by David Schweizer. Opens Oct. 6 at 7. (Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

THE BALD SOPRANO / THE LESSON
In Tina Howe's agile adaptation, Ionesco's "The Bald Soprano," inspired by a French-English conversation manual, becomes not merely absurd but uproarious. Two English couples meet in a bourgeois living room and make senseless small talk, interrupted frequently by a belligerent maid and a long-winded fireman. Michael Countryman and Jan Maxwell, as Mr. and Mrs. Smith, evoke a Monty Python parody of "Brief Encounter"; Seana Kofoed and Robert Stanton, as the benighted Martins, have a rare gift for physical comedy. Carl Forsman directs with an assured command of verbal high jinks and comic timing. The evening's second play, "The Lesson," is anticlimactic. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

FINER NOBLE GASES
Set in a Lower East Side apartment that looks like the men's room at CBGB during the height of punk, Adam Rapp's play presents one hellish and hallu-

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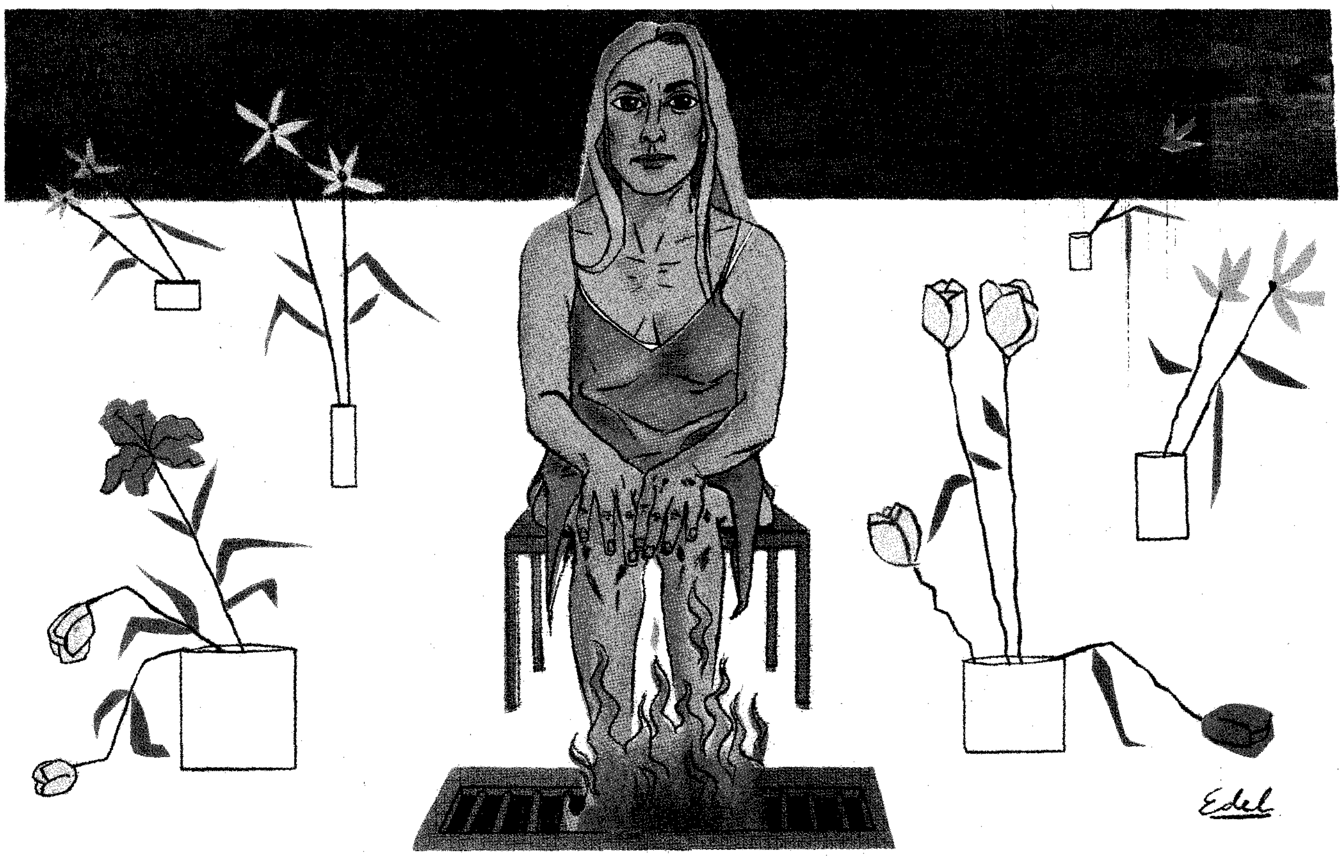
cinogenic day in the life of four guys who used to be in a band. Rapp took no chances on casting; he hired the rock outfit Less (Rob Beitzel, Michael Chernus, Ray Rizzo, and Paul Sparks) to play the principals. They do a fine job of talking nonsense, jittering like junkies, and subtly revealing their nostalgia. Directed by Michael John Garcés. (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl., west of Seventh Ave., between W. 11th and Perry Sts. 212-868-4444. Through Oct. 24.)

HEDDA GABLER
In Ivo van Hove's forceful update of the Ibsen play, Glenn Fitzgerald gives a charged performance as Eilert Lovborg, the brooding, self-destructive genius that Hedda Gabler (Elizabeth Marvel) desires, envies, and hates. Marvel's Gabler emphasizes her childish cruelty rather than her abstracted dreaminess: she dresses in a baby-doll negligee and has tantrums when her wishes are thwarted. Jason Butler Harner is funny as her oblivious, surrendered husband, George Tesman; Ana Reeder is touching as the limited Mrs. Elvsted, who loves Lovborg unselfishly; and John Douglas Thompson gives great breadth to the character of Judge Brack, whose designs on Hedda are made clearer in this production than in most. With an effective modern set by Jan Versweyveld—Ikea-white walls, a video door monitor, and a TV where Tesman goes to tune out—that makes the anger feel contemporary. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200. Closes Oct. 24.)



Elizabeth Marvel as Hedda Gabler, in Ivo van Hove's production of the Ibsen play, now at New York Theatre Workshop.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

THE LEPERS OF BAILE BAISTE
Long-suppressed memories of sexual abuse by a priest in a small Irish town come to light when a local boy, now grown up, returns from abroad. The outline of Ronan Noone's 2002 play seems unfortunately familiar now, but the material is presented effectively and without preachiness. Directed by David Sullivan. (Phil Bosakowski, 354 W. 45th St. 212-868-4444.)

OPEN DOORS
At Carnegie Hall, a musical tribute to Stephen Sondheim in honor of his seventieth birthday mixes narration by the composer with a revue of more than forty of his songs, sung by Kate Baldwin, Victoria Clark, Gregg Edelman, Jan Maxwell, and Eric Jordan Young, accompanied by piano (Rob Berman), cello (Mairi Dorman), and double bass and bass guitar (Dick Sarpola). Directed by David Kernan. (212-247-7800. Through Oct. 9.)

OTHELLO
BAM's Next Wave Festival opens with a production by England's Cheek by Jowl theatre company. Directed by Declan Donnellan. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Through Oct. 9.)

PEOPLE BE HEARD
In Quincy Long's comedy with songs, a small-town school board takes on the question of whether creationism should be taught in local schools. When a new board member, a single mother and stripper named Rita Dell Delaney (the winsome Funda Duval), joins the debate, she becomes the tiebreaker. The director, Erica Schmidt, smoothly switches locations between the Wiggle Room strip club, where Delaney dances, and the middle-school auditorium, where tempers rage. With Conrad John Shuck as the board's embattled president, and Annie Golden and Brian Hutchison as a number of disgruntled townspeople. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

WOMEN ON THE VERGE
Two middle-aged Irish groupies journey to Donegal to hear their handsome idol sing, in a comedy by the Irish playwright Marie Jones. Directed by Lynne Taylor Corbett. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444.)

ALSO PLAYING

AVENUE Q
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.

BOMBAY DREAMS
Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

DRACULA, THE MUSICAL
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.

THE FROGS
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

GUANTÁNAMO: HONOR BOUND TO DEFEND FREEDOM
45 Bleecker Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

MRS. FARNSWORTH
Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

NOBODY'S LUNCH
P.S. 122, First Ave. at 10th St. 212-477-5288.

THE OLDEST PROFESSION
Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

PUGILIST SPECIALIST
59E59 Theatre, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.

ROSE RAGE
Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

SLAVA'S SNOWSHOW
Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-505-0700.

TABLES FOR TWO

CAFÉ SABARSKY
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-288-0665)—The Mittel-European flavor of East Eighty-sixth Street, Yorkville's main drag, turned middle-American years ago, when the old German cafés and Konditoreis gave way to stores selling sneakers and cell phones, but anyone who's homesick for the Kaiser, as Joseph Roth might have said, can relish a kind of restoration at Café Sabarsky. The café is on the ground floor of the Neue Galerie, the three-year-old museum of early-twentieth-century German and Austrian art that occupies a grand Beaux-Arts mansion at Eighty-sixth Street's swanky Fifth Avenue end. The space, modelled on a fin-de-siècle Viennese *Kaffeehaus*, is stately and period-perfect, with wood-panelled walls, Josef Hoffman fixtures, Adolf Loos chairs, and a selection of Austrian newspapers. Sometimes, in the evenings, a pianist plays Strauss. Children are barred from the museum but permitted in the restaurant, where something in the air—a vestigial memory of Captain Von Trapp's whistle, perhaps, or the promise of schlag—compels them to behave, in a seen-and-not-heard kind of way.

Kurt Gutenbrunner, the chef and owner of Wallsé, a Viennese restaurant downtown, runs the kitchen, which turns out slim, delicate renditions of traditional Austrian cuisine. Breakfast is exquisite and sparsely attended; the bacon and scrambled eggs that accompany the *Gröstl* (a potato-onion hash) are a rebuke to the Greek coffee shops down the street. Around lunchtime, a line forms in the museum's lobby, yet lingerers get no dirty looks—from the servers, at least. (This may be the place's most inauthentic touch.) And there is much to linger over, as the day wears on: liverwurst-and-onion confit spread on squares of rough wheat bread; a chestnut soup with a cap of foam and a prune soaked in Armagnac; a glass of *Holundersaft*—elder-flower syrup in sparkling water, with a single elder-flower leaf. Some things on the menu, such as the salads and the spätzle, are little more than adequate stopovers on the way to the sweets. The tortes and strudels, arrayed on a marble shelf, rival the Klimts and Schieles in the galleries upstairs. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Entrées $10-$23.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*

STRING OF PEARLS
59E59 Theatre, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.
SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE
Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.
WICKED
Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.
WONDERFUL TOWN
Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

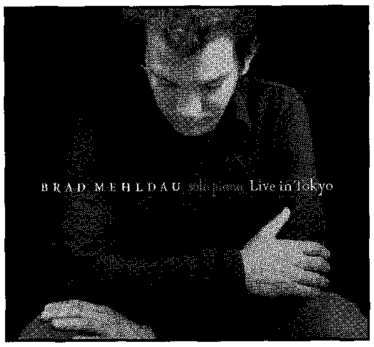
DANCE

"FOREVER TANGO"
Luis Bravo's evening of Argentine dance features fourteen dancers and an eleven-piece orchestra. The show has returned to the Shubert following a successful run this summer. (225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. Oct. 5, Oct. 7-8, and Oct. 12 at 8; Oct. 6 and Oct. 9 at 2 and 8; and Oct. 10 at 3. Through Nov. 28.)

JANE COMFORT AND COMPANY
Comfort's "Persephone" recasts the Greek myth as a coming-of-age story with Jungian undertones. The heroine travels from her aboveground home, where the dancing is lyrical and flowing, into a neon-lit underworld where the rough-and-tumble movement centers on a series of rolling, sensual duets for Persephone and Hades. Tigger Benford's gamelan-inspired score is played live, and the dancers also sing. The program includes the Bessie-

Words on Music

Borders' music expert Jessica Sendra says:
"Brad Mehldau distills his wealth of experience and sense of artistic adventure into its purest form on this compelling live solo disc."



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NONESUCH

"One of his generations most gifted and thoughtful pianists," *(Washington Post)*
Brad Mehldau makes his Nonesuch debut with solo improvisations on Thelonious Monk, Nick Drake, George Gershwin and Radiohead, recorded live in Tokyo.

Critic's Choice – *The New York Times*
"★★★★– Has the whiff of a record of the year."
The Times, London

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winning fantasy "Underground River" and the political satire "Three Bagatelles for the Righteous," updated for the current election season. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Oct. 5-8 at 8, Oct. 9 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 10 at 2 and 7:30.)

SIDI GOMA
The twelve musicians and dancers of Sidi Goma belong to a Sufi tribe in western India that has roots in Africa. The rhythms, instrumentation, and bent-kneed movement reflect the tribe's East African origins, as do the Swahili words in the lyrics. Their dance, a form of devotional ecstasy, culminates in seeming irreverence: mugging and strutting in peacock-plumed skirts, they toss coconuts in the air, which fall on their heads and burst open. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 8 at 8.)

JOHANNES WIELAND: "ONE"
The German choreographer presents a varied program at Diane von Furstenberg's downtown space (see This Week). (383 W. 12th St., between Washington and West Sts. 212-696-6632. Oct. 7 at 7:30, Oct. 8 at 8, and Oct. 9-10 at 3 and 8.)

"AMARAMÁLIA ABANDONO"
In its U.S. début, the Companhia Portuguesa de Bailado Contemporâneo pays tribute to the late, great fado singer Amália Rodrigues, admired for her gift for *saudade*, a kind of melancholic yearning that builds to catharsis. The choreographer Vasco Wellenkamp has channelled Rodrigues's vocal passion into virtuoso leaps and aggressive partnering. The dance vocabulary is broad: a couple will step out of a waltz hold and into a very modern lift. With original music by Carlos Zíngaro that provides interludes of relief from the teasing rhythms of the fado. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Oct. 12 at 8. Through Oct. 17.)

URBAN BUSH WOMEN
In 1974, Danspace Project set up shop, presenting innovative and experimental dance at St. Mark's In-the-Bowery. This season, the group commemorates its thirtieth anniversary graciously, hosting "Anniversaries," a series that celebrates several long-lived troupes. It begins with a showcase for Urban Bush Women, the provocative, robust African-American dance-theatre group, now in its twentieth year. The program features works by both current members and alumnae, including Laurie Carlos and Robin Marie Wilson. (Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Oct. 8-10 at 8:30.)

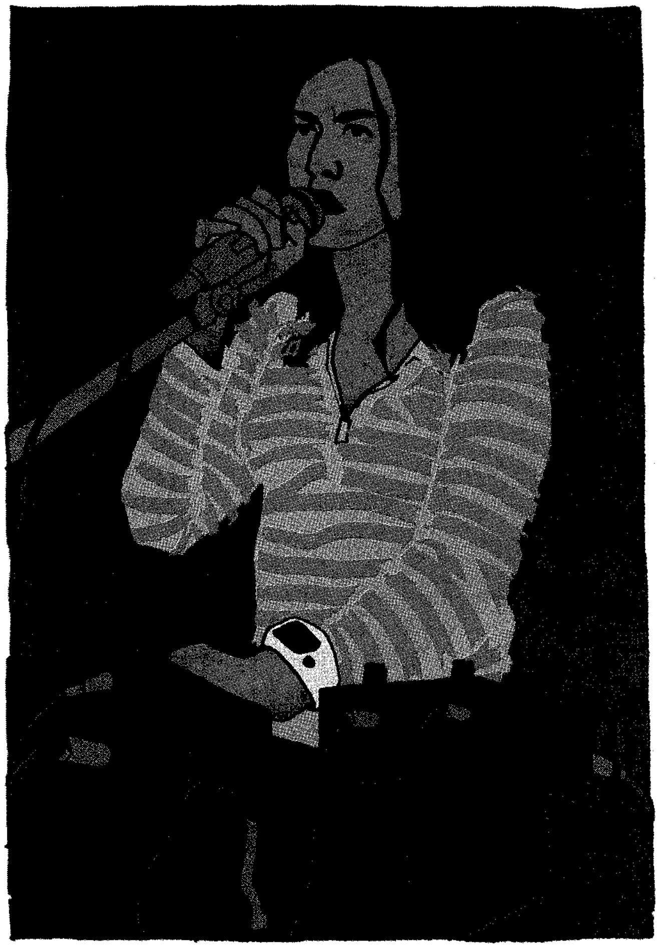
BIG DANCE THEATRE: "PLAN B"
Goldilocks meets "Twin Peaks" in a dance-theatre piece by Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar set in a surreal woods and performed by Lazar, Tymberly Canale, Kate Johnson, and Molly Hickok. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Oct. 6-9 at 7:30.)

MOLISSA FENLEY AND DANCERS
Fenley presents a new staging of her 1983 BAM piece, "Hemispheres," with a reworked fusion score by the original composer, Anthony Davis, performed live by the Kitchen's House Blend band. The dancers include Fenley, Ashley Brunning, Tessa Chandler, Wanjiru Kamuyu, Cassie Mey, and Paz Tanjuaquio, wearing costumes by Rei Kawakubo and Ralph Rucci. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11. Oct. 6-9 at 8.)

INFINITY DANCE THEATRE
Kitty Lunn's company for dancers with and without disabilities has a season at the Joyce SoHo that features both premières and repertory work. Highlights include Dario Vaccaro's "Eight Seasons," set to Vivaldi and Astor Piazzolla; Gabriela Poler's "Neruda," set to three poems; and Peter Pucci's new work "Chant," set to a Hebrew prayer and performed by Lunn, who is paralyzed from mid-hip down. The program also includes Pucci's "In Time Like Air," from 2001, created for Lunn and her wheelchair. (155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Oct. 7-10 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

WILCO
The alternative-country heroes turned underground-pop avatars recently released "A Ghost Is Born," the follow-up to their acclaimed 2002 album, "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot." The local brother-and-sister group the Fiery Furnaces is the opening act. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 212-247-4777. Oct. 5-6 at 8.)



The Dutch performer Solex, appearing at Rothko on Oct. 8.

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

BARRY MANILOW
From his humble beginning as Bette Midler's accompanist in piano bars and bathhouses, Manilow became an adult-contemporary balladeer par excellence, and his reign remains largely unchallenged. (Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. Oct. 7 at 8.)

LL COOL J
The hip-hop star, one of the most perennially successful artists in a genre not known for longevity, recently released his eleventh album, "The Definition." (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 212-247-4777. Oct. 7 at 8.)

DON BYRON
The clarinettist Byron, inspired by Lester Young's mid-forties work with Buddy Rich and Nat King Cole, scales back to a threesome for his new album, "Ivey-Divey." He's joined here by the pianist Jason Moran and the drummer Billy Hart. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 8 at 7:30 and 9:30.)

BEASTIE BOYS
These local boys started out more than twenty years ago as a punk band, but they won their fame by irreverently hijacking hip-hop music. Their new album, "To the 5 Boroughs," is a love letter to their home town and a zealous jab at the Republican Right. (Madison Square Garden. Oct. 9 at 7:30.)

MORRISSEY
A seven-year absence from the music scene without so much as a new single would render most artists passé, but the former Smiths vocalist and eccentric alternative icon remains deified by a forlorn nation of disciples. Morrissey returned earlier this year with a new album, "You Are the Quarry." (Radio City Music Hall. Oct. 9-10 at 8.)

BRIAN WILSON
The American legend and erstwhile Beach Boy (see This Week). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 12-13 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Oct. 7: The blistering blues rock of the guitarist **Johnny Winter.** Oct. 9: **Mindy Smith,** a fresh-faced young singer-songwriter, may have been born and raised on Long Island, but her voice comes straight out of the heartland. "Jolene," her contribution to last year's Dolly Parton tribute album, "Just Because I'm a Woman," earned accolades from Parton herself. Oct. 10: The British musical funnyman **Neil Innes,** a veteran of the endearingly surreal Bonzo Dog (Doo Dah) Band and of Eric Idle's beloved Beatles sendup, the Rutles.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—Oct. 6: The local outfit **Mosquitos,** which specializes in fetching bossa-nova-influenced pop, celebrates the release of its new CD, "Sunshine Barato." Oct. 8-9: The **Loser's Lounge** tips its hat to David Bowie. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Oct. 6: Twenty years ago, when the world was mad for New Wave, the British band **Marillion** took their name from a Tolkien novel and embraced the rococo intricacies of progressive rock. They've become an institution at home, but they remain a curiosity here—this evening is a rare Stateside appearance.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Oct. 8: The **Fairport Convention.** Back in the late sixties, this legendary British folk-rock unit hatched the careers of Richard Thompson and Sandy Denny, among others. With the founding member Simon Nicol still steering, the band sounds as rowdy and randy as ever. Their latest release is "Over the Next Hill." Oct. 9: Ralph Covert, a kids' musician who goes by the name **Ralph's World,** celebrates the release of his new album, "The Amazing Adventures of Kid Astro," with a brunch-time show.

LIVING ROOM
154 Ludlow St. (212-533-7235)—Oct. 7: **Rachel Loshak, Dennis Brennan, Julliana Nash, Teddy Thompson, Marshall Crenshaw,** and others perform in a benefit for their friend Jason Crigler, a local guitarist who is recovering from a brain hemorrhage. For information about tickets, visit www.bossycat.com/jason.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Oct. 6: **L.P.,** the hard-rocking daughter of an opera singer who lent her strong vocals to Cracker's 1998 album, "Gentlemen's Blues," drags out songs from her latest release,

"Suburban Sprawl and Alcohol." With the Boston-based singer **Bleu** and **Butterfly Boucher,** an up-and-coming Australian vixen who counts Liz Phair among her fans. Oct. 11: High hopes surrounded **Flickerstick** after they won VH-1's "Band on the Run" competition four years ago. But the Texas alternative-rock band failed to meet the sales expectations of their major label, and they soon found themselves back on the indie-rock bread line. To paraphrase Hemingway, hunger is good discipline.

ROTHKO
116 Suffolk St., at Rivington St. (212-475-7088)—Oct. 8: **Solex** is the alter ego of an Amsterdam record-store owner named Elisabeth Esselink. Her spunky début album, 1998's "Solex vs. the Hitmeister," featured a broken-sounding, sample-heavy pop. For her sophomore release, "Pick Up," she used bootleg recordings of small-time Dutch acts to create a very personal vocabulary of fractured beats and harmonies. She's touring to promote her latest album, "The Laughing Stock of Indie Rock," which, as might be expected, has plenty of energy and amusing high jinks. With the atmospheric rock of **On! Air! Library!** and the cool electronica of Iceland's **Worm Is Green.**

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—Oct. 6: In the late seventies and the early eighties, **Peter Case,** a fifty-year-old musician from Buffalo, played power pop and New Wave music with the Nerves and the Plimsouls. In 1986, he crossed over to folk rock on his self-titled solo début. His live shows are intimate yet wildly energetic; he can single-handedly turn any venue into a honky-tonk. Case recently released his first greatest-hits album, "Who's Gonna Go Your Crooked Mile? Selected Tracks, 1994-2004." Oct. 7: **Alison Brown,** who left a life in investment banking for a career as a banjo musician. Anyone who thinks this was a foolish move hasn't heard her play. Oct. 10: **Marcus Ardoin,** a descendant of Alphonse (Bois Sec) Ardoin, the legendary ambassador of *la musique créole,* the foot-stomping string-fed precursor to contemporary zydeco, makes his New York City début.

SPIRIT
530 W. 27th St. (212-268-9477)—Oct. 8: "The Ramones Beat on Cancer" pays tribute to the late Johnny Ramone. The **Strokes, Blondie,** and **Sonic Youth** are scheduled to perform.

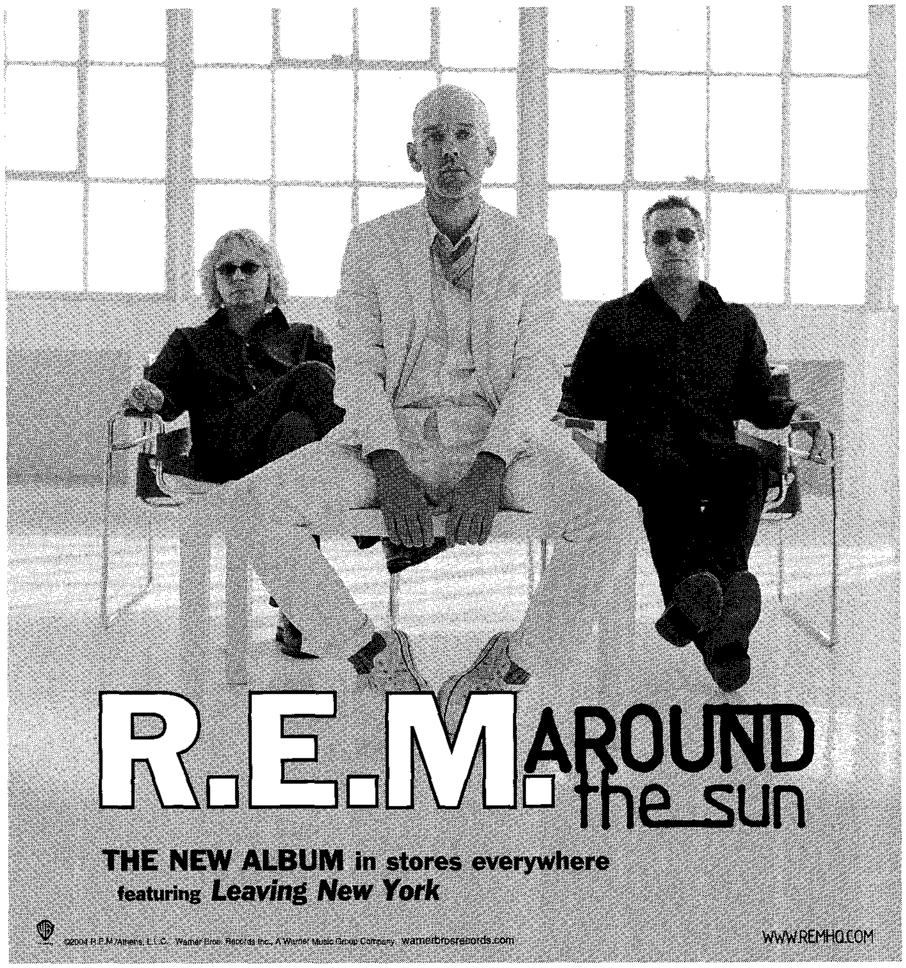
WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Oct. 8: The Japanese pop musicians **Puffy AmiYumi** (known simply as Puffy at home; the grousing of a certain name-changing rap-and-fashion mogul caused them to add a surname here) are superstars in their native land. Their shape-shifting tunes reference everything from musty disco to glittering New Wave to Charo. It's pure show biz, and it works just fine. With **Mosquitos** (see Fez). Oct. 12: The **Libertines** have a tragically chic aesthetic and a tendency for over-publicized peccadilloes, yet they've avoided being eclipsed by their own reputation by churning out sharp, emotionally raw rock.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Oct. 16: The singer **Sandy Stewart's** moment of glory was her 1963 hit recording of "My Coloring Book." Her son and accompanist, **Bill Charlap,** is currently experiencing his own place in the sun as he enters the first rank of mainstream jazz pianists.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Oct. 10: "Birds of a Feather," a tribute to Charlie Parker. Paying homage to his onetime boss, the spry seventy-seven-year-old drummer **Roy Haynes** has assembled a solid group of younger players—the saxophonist **Kenny Garrett,** the trumpeter **Nicholas Payton,** the bassist **John Patitucci,** and the pianist **Dave Kikoski.** They may be bebop babies compared to Haynes, but they know how to get the job done.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound mu-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rals, and, through Oct. 9, **Dixie Carter,** formerly of the television show "Designing Women." Cabaret is where her heart is, and she expresses her love with a wide-ranging repertoire and good humor. **Bobby Short** begins his run on Oct. 12.

DANNY'S
346 W. 46th St. (212-265-8133)—Oct. 9-10: The inimitable vocalist **Blossom Dearie** returns to her regular Saturday- and Sunday-evening schedule.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Oct. 5-10: A tribute to the drummer Art Blakey featuring a host of alumni from his Jazz Messengers. The performers include the trumpeter **Valery Ponamarev** and the saxophonists **David Schnitter** and **Bobby Watson. Ralph Peterson** (Oct. 5-6), **Lewis Hayes** (Oct. 7-8), and **Ben Riley** (Oct. 9-10) take turns standing in for "Buhania." Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—**Rudresh Mahanthappa,** an inventive alto saxophonist associated with the pianist **Vijay Ayer,** brings in his own quartet on Oct. 8 for "Mother Tongue: Do You Speak Indian?," a conceptual piece that reconfigures subcontinental speech patterns into musical phrases.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Oct. 7-10: The singer **Ann Hampton Callaway** focusses on her new album, "Slow," which balances her well-crafted originals with material by Carole King, Van Morrison, and others.

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Oct. 8-9: The high-energy trumpeter **Malachi Thompson** augments his Freebop band with **Billy Harper,** a volatile tenor saxophonist who will bring more than a little nineteen-sixties spirit to the proceedings.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Oct. 10: **Roy Hargrove,** an aggressive, historically aware trumpeter, and his band. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830."** Through Dec. 12. ♦ **"Andy Goldsworthy on the Roof."** Through Oct. 31. ♦ **"Artists' Artists,"** a gathering of portraits of and by artists. Through Nov. 14. ♦ **"All That Glitters Is Not Gold: The Art, Form, and Function of Gilt Bronze in the French Interior."** Through Feb. 20, 2005. ♦ **"Art Deco Paris."** Through Feb. 27, 2005. ♦ **"Hidden Jewels: Korean Art from the Mary Griggs Burke Collection."** Through Jan. 9, 2005. ♦ **"German Drawings and Prints from the Weimar Republic (1919-33)."** Through Oct. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
The museum is closed until Nov. 20, when it will reopen in its renovated and expanded building at 11 West 53rd Street.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—The Guggenheim has the largest collection of work by Vasily Kandinsky in the United States, and its curators have decided to devote one gallery to his work permanently. **"Kandinsky Gallery: An Inaugural Selection"** kicks things off. Through May 11, 2005. ♦ Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"War! Protest in America, 1965-2004."** A program of documentary films screening daily. Through Oct. 24. ♦ **"Jacob Lawrence's War Series."** Through Jan. 31, 2005. ♦ **"Memorials of War."** Through Nov. 28. ♦ **"Pop/Concept: Highlights from the Permanent Collection."** Through Oct. 24. ♦ **"Evidence of Impact: Art and Photography 1963-1978."** Through Oct. 10. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—It would be a fun exercise to walk through **"Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread"** and see which works you could match to their creators without consulting the wall texts. The answers are often obvious: Judd's practical objects look much like his straight artistic ones, but with the planes adjusted to more useful heights; Dan Flavin's place settings are edged in fluorescent-bright colors that reflect onto the dishes below them; Robert Rauschenberg's tire lamp has the filthy elegance of one of his mid-century combines. Additional furnishings come from Scott Burton, Joel Shapiro, Sol LeWitt, Richard Tuttle, and John Chamberlain, among others. Comfort is not always the point: the room that was once Mrs. Carnegie's bedroom has been refurnished with shin-bruising minimalist pieces, and Tom Sachs's "Bitch Lounge," in white tufted leather, was designed as an uneasy chair. Through Feb. 27, 2005. ♦ **"Faster, Cheaper, Newer, More: Revolutions of 1848."** Through Jan. 9, 2005. ♦ **"Josef and Anni Albers: Designs for Living."** Through Feb. 27, 2005. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 9; Saturdays, 10 to 6; and Sundays, noon to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection."** Through Jan. 2, 2005. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM
Temporarily located in the Chelsea Museum, 556 W. 22nd St. (212-219-1222)—What distinguishes Kayle Brandon and Heath Bunting's work from that of other cyber-pranksters is that part of their collaboration takes place in the physical world. The British pair deliberately cross and recross international borders, travelling without visas or passports, circumventing guards, gates, and other barriers. **"Rules of Crime,"** installed as a laid-back, low-tech media lounge, includes access to Bunting's usually restricted Web site ("Dataflage," like camo for digital information, protects it) and to "BorderXers Lunch-Boxes," foil-wrapped packets of nuts and fruit tagged for field situations involving "Contemplation," "Underground," "Sex," etc. Through Nov. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—This newly opened museum is Manhattan's first devoted entirely to Himalayan art. (Open Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 7; Wednesdays and Sundays, 11 to 5; and Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

DAVID MILLER

The Rubin Museum, featuring Himalayan art, has opened in Chelsea.

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

VINCENZO AMATO
Eight new sculptures made from welded steel, their minimal forms drenched in rich lacquers. A witty pair of "Canned Fish" sculptures evoke both fish and can opener; "Silence" is the stringless, neckless form of an unplayable guitar. The pared-down shapes—others suggest a lemon, an ark, the prow of a boat—have the surface perfection and streamlined appeal of something just off a Detroit assembly line. Through Oct. 16. (McGrath, 20 W. 57th St. 212-956-3366.)

PAUL HENRY RAMIREZ
Ramirez's candy-colored abstractions are like prettier, more fluid versions of canvases by Peter Halley, an elder statesman of Boone's stable. Both favor linked forms in solid, architectural compositions, although Halley takes an austere Neo-Geo tack where Ramirez prefers curves, exaggerated drips that morph into hearts, and lines that curl into hairy sprockets. Individually and collectively titled "In Fluent Form," these beautifully crafted fantasies mimic the voluptuousness of the human body, though their fussy stylizing risks growing wearisome. Through Oct. 23. (Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-752-2929.)

LUCY WILLIAMS
Iconic architectural images become handcrafted bas-reliefs, the brittle models warmed up with homespun materials. The Olympic diving pool in Helsinki, for instance, lies under a woven blue-and-white tapestry sky. The international-arrivals terminal at J.F.K. becomes a stacked collage, complete with a colorful rendition of its Calder mobile. From a distance, the reliefs look as sharp and angular as any architectural rendering. Up close, though, they're softened by shaggy details like the yarn front yard in "Building for a Better Tomorrow," a version of the architect Peter Womersley's Farnley Hey house in West Yorkshire. Through Oct. 9. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-688-5951.)

"THREE CLASSICS"
Large paintings from the early seventies by Robert Motherwell, Frank Stella, and Helen Frankenthaler. Through Oct. 30. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550.)

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

WILL COTTON
Four large paintings of nude women luxuriating in landscapes composed of piles of sweets. A woman reclining in clouds of cotton candy recalls Tiepolo; another turns away, in the pose of an Ingres odalisque, her thigh smeared with melting ice cream. Through Oct. 23. (Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.)

RACKSTRAW DOWNES
The veteran realist landscape painter inaugurates a new gallery with a profoundly absorbing show of work dating from 1998 to 2004. The subjects are odd and a mite glum: a viaduct in Harlem, a flood-monitoring station on the Rio Grande, spindly young trees in Liberty Park (with and without the World Trade Center in the distance), metal ductwork in an old attic. The treatment, in subtle patches of tonally adjusted color, exalts eyesight over brainwork: to see, in his pictures, is *not* to remember the name of the thing you see. Downes always works in situ and never uses photographs; his capacity to capture the obdurate strangeness of the real humiliates photography and the lazy habits of mind that it induces in us. Through Oct. 30. (Cunningham, 541 W. 25th St. 212-242-2772.)

MARC HANDELMAN
Handelman's atmospheric bursts and auras of brightness recall the radiant light of Whistler paintings—the splattered, golden look that led Ruskin to famously accuse him of "flinging a pot of paint in the public's

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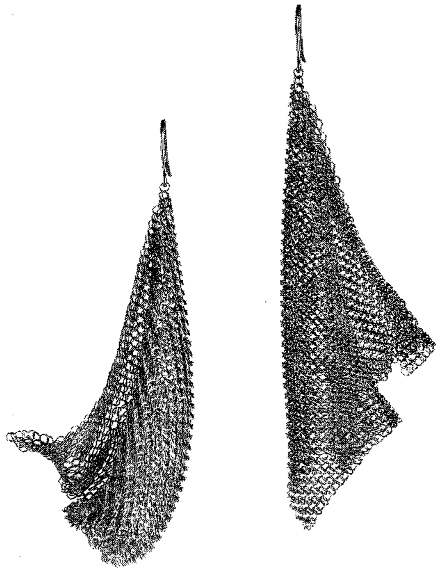

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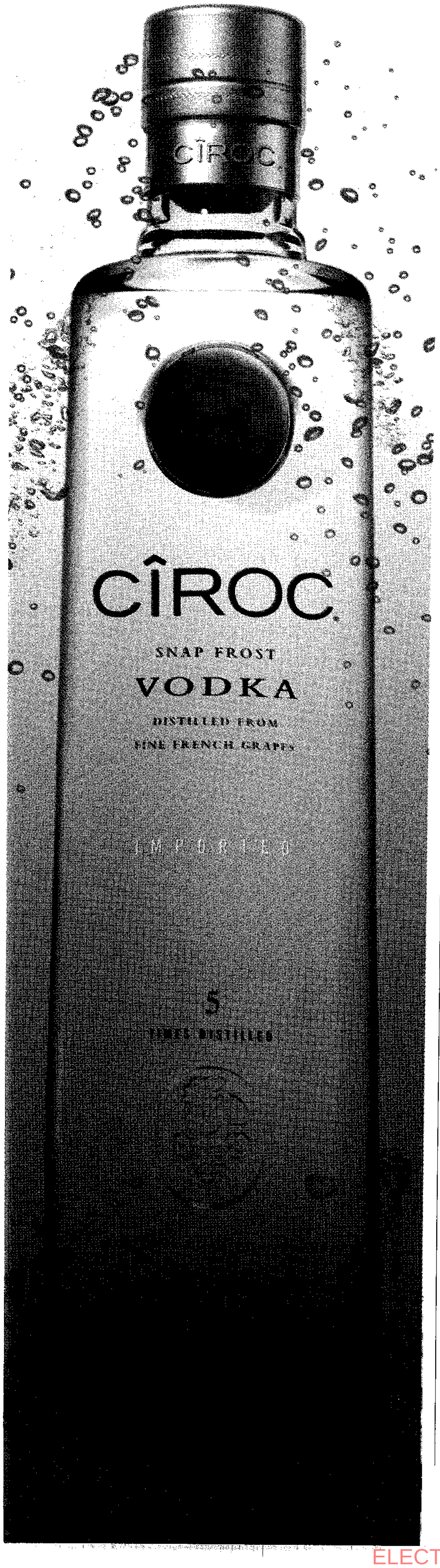


face." Fireworks light up the painted sky in "Illumination Round," while "Hypothetical" riffs off the contemporary kitsch of Thomas Kinkade, the self-proclaimed "painter of light." "Jubilee," a slyly humorous take on nineteenth-century landscape painting, turns a Blakean sun into an indoor lamp nourishing a massive marijuana bud. Through Oct. 9. (Lombard-Fried, 531 W. 26th St. 212-967-8040.)

ROBIN RHODE

A series of photographs shows a man wheeling an empty hand truck down an alley, the missing cargo represented by shimmying line drawings. In a video, a man lies on his back in a street, fiddling with the tire of a jacked-up cartoon car. Like the funny-paper metaphysician who walks through a doorway he has just inked on a rock, Rhode turns spray-painted or chalked doodles into film frames, in which a young man's mundane labors morph to slapstick without fully leaving the realm of heavy lifting and greasy hands. Through Oct. 30. (Rubenstein, 527 W. 23rd St. 212-627-8000.)

UGO RONDINONE

The gallery is bisected by "Rain," a wall of chains stretching from floor to ceiling and topped with silvery trompe-l'oeil clouds. Giant black cast-rubber masks stare out from the walls. A copse of translucent resin trees—cast from those in an olive grove in the artist's parents' birthplace, outside Naples—populate one side of the rain curtain, while a grid of black columns emits the sound of bells on the other. It's a puzzling, dense performance from an artist whose work has vacillated from gorgeous, sleepy videos to sculptures of fat clowns to heroically scaled ink-on-paper landscapes. Through Oct. 30. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200.)

SAM TAYLOR-WOOD

A distinguished roster of actors bawl for the camera in "Crying Men"; the resulting photographs play like crafty subversions of standard publicity shots. One can only marvel at the performances Taylor-Wood extracted from luminaries like Paul Newman, Dustin Hoffman, and Sean Penn. The other works in the show, "Ascension" and "Suspension," don't reach the same heights. The former is a video with two human figures—one sleeping, one tap-dancing—and a bird, and the latter is a series of digitally manipulated photos of the artist suspended in her studio. Through Oct. 30. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

JANE AND LOUISE WILSON

The London twins' ferociously effective new video installation is entitled "Erewhon," after Samuel Butler's dystopian satire of 1872. Five screens are deployed, two of them cantilevered overhead, to immerse viewers in sumptuous images of ruined New Zealand hospitals and rëenactments of a young women's exercise class from the period of the First World War. That time in New Zealand was marked by catastrophic losses of young men and by a eugenics-driven obsession with female physical fitness. The Wilsons transform their recondite subject into a dream-adventure with elements of documentary and tableau vivant; the results are mordant, sad, and almost painfully beautiful, reaffirming the sisters' leadership in the thriving art of video installation. Through Nov. 6. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

LYNN DAVIS

Davis, who is best known for her refined, large-scale, black-and-white photographs of icebergs, pyramids, and monuments toned with selenium and gold, has gone in a new direction for this show. She used color film and made forty-inch-square ink-jet prints that she manipulated digitally, using both positive and negative images in a palette that ranges from deep black through several tones of blue and into gray. The photographs mainly have to do with space exploration, including views of an abandoned launch site in Kazakhstan, a platform at the Kennedy Space Center, in Florida, and an actual satellite launch in French Guiana. The architecture of the blueish scaffolding, cranes, towers, walkways, and girders is rendered formally, and could be intimidatingly cold, but the way the ink falls on the fine German watercolor paper makes the surface of the prints strangely soft and painterly. Through Oct. 30. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.)

TIM DAVIS

"My Life in Politics" is a look at the banality of American political life. At a fast-food restaurant, Davis found a mural with various depictions of Martin Luther King, Jr., that boldly declares "One People, One Nation, One Taco, One Destiny." After being told that he couldn't use his tripod in the museum at the Nixon birthplace, in San Clemente, California, he instead photographed an iridescent oil stain in the parking lot. The tone is set with the first picture, a ripped and peeling Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington; the show concludes with a series of details of statues called "Founding Fathers' Crotches." Through Nov. 5. (Bohen Foundation, 415 W. 13th St. 212-414-4575.)

TODD HIDO

Moody color prints of desolate American landscapes, taken with long exposure times from behind the windshield of a car. Many of the photographs were made just after a rainstorm, when the windshield was still wet or streaked, which gives them a blurred or, in one case, a "distressed" look, almost as if the Starn twins had been working on it. Telephone poles lean precariously over muddy fields, snow-covered roads twist off to the edge of the frame, and leafless trees stand alone in the mist. The prints range in size from eleven by fourteen to thirty-eight by forty-eight inches, and are austerely beautiful. Through Oct. 16. (Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410.)

CANDIDA HÖFER

There is a subtle shift toward flesh and blood in Höfer's new architectural interiors. These large color prints—like her clinical depictions of lobbies and lunchrooms—depict ornate Venetian palaces and libraries and museums in the Netherlands. The spaces are devoid of people (except for a subtle self-portrait taken in a mirror at the Palazzo Zenobia), but the elaborate frescos, classical statuary, and furniture give the vast rooms a human feel. Through Oct. 30. (Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 212-627-1018.)

AN-MY LÊ

Black-and-white photographs of scrubby hills pounded by mortar fire, U.S. Marines scanning the horizon, convoys of Humvees snaking along dusty trails, soldiers bivouacking among their jeeps in the desert. Could be Iraq or Afghanistan, but it's just Twenty-Nine Palms, California, where the Marines train to go to more dangerous places. There's a conceptual disconnect here. Lê is a Vietnamese immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1975 with her family at another Marine base in California, Camp Pendleton. In an earlier project, she photographed rëenactments of episodes in the war in Vietnam. Through Oct. 23. (Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372.)

Short List

JUSTINE KURLAND

Gorney Bravin + Lee, 534 W. 26th St.
212-352-8372. Through Oct. 9.

ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI

Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 212-414-0370.
Through Oct. 23.

SHOMEI TOMATSU

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 212-832-1155.
Through Jan. 2, 2005.

ALEX WEBB

Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-4819.
Through Oct. 30.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

Oct. 8 at 10:15 A.M.: A monumental Japanesque display cabinet in ebonized rosewood, circa 1877, complete with pagoda-shaped cornices and snarling salamander decorations, is the undisputed star of this auction of elegantly baroque accoutrements for the well-appointed home, which includes vases, porcelain and ivory figurines, marble busts, and furniture, all from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. ♦ Oct. 12 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: The timepiece as ultimate luxury is the theme of this auction of watches, wristwatches, and clocks of all types. The tiny, highly decorated singing bird box, a delightful cross between a watch and a music box, was a prime example of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century obsession with automatons; the sale features three of them in gold and enamel, all made in 1825. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
Oct. 6 at 10 A.M. and 2: The last day of Christie's monthly "House Sale" includes the contents from the capacious apartment of the tastemaker, fashion icon, and shopping addict Eleanor Lambert, the woman behind the International Best-Dressed List and a friend of many of the high and mighty. The selection is generous: the woman who could crave an Art Deco *verre-églomisé*-and-smoked-glass screen (which could bring as much as twelve thousand dollars) always had room for another piece of Irish Delft or Chelsea porcelain. ♦ Oct. 8 at 10 A.M.: Zedekiah Belknap's prim and proper "Portrait of a Lady" is one of the highlights of a sale of American furniture, prints, and folk art. ♦ Oct. 12 at 10 A.M., 2, and 5: Christie's topflight auction of jewelry—which includes items from the collection of Fred Leighton, the legendary procurer of jewels to the stars—features several items belonging to grandes dames, be they Princess Mathilde Bonaparte (the "Tudor Rose," the highlight of the sale, a diamond brooch expected to bring up to eight hundred thousand dollars), Queen Geraldine of Albania, the Duchess of Windsor, or Maria Callas (a pair of natural-pearl-drop earrings). (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

CLASSICAL NOTES

THE A-LIST
Thomas Adès's **"America: A Prophecy,"** the piece that gives its title to a stunning new Adès disk on EMI, caused quite a stir when it was premièred by the New York Philharmonic, on November 11, 1999. A mezzo-soprano intones quotations from an ancient Mayan text that foretells the culture's destruction at the hands of Spanish invaders ("Your cities will fall. . . . On earth we shall burn"), alternating with a chorus that sings bizarrely reimagined Christian battle songs, while the orchestra churns and grunts in the club-music-cum-modernist style that has become the young composer's trademark. To some, it was the highlight of the orchestra's millennium commissions; to others, it was an arrogant provocation thrown at the feet of its American audience.

Twenty-two months later, the Philharmonic turned to an American composer, John Adams, to provide a piece that would honor the victims of the terrorist attacks and console the survivors. At the world première of **"On the Transmigration of Souls,"** the piece seemed to be an admirable and original response to a nearly impossible assignment. But on disk (Nonesuch) it emerges as a work of overwhelming power. Adams has modestly described the piece as a "memory space," and compared to many of his previous works the language of "Transmigration" at first seems cool. Strands of stratospheric lyricism combine with prerecorded tracks of spoken voices reading out the names of the fallen and fragments from the hundreds of missing-persons posters and impromptu memorials that were posted around Ground Zero. The work reaches a maelstrom of an orchestral climax, crowned by the New York Choral Artists and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus chanting out "life, life, life, life." In depersonalizing his music, Adams has offered each of us a chance to project our own memories; Lorin Maazel's wizardly command of this complex piece, and his orchestra's expert playing, should prove as enduring a testament to the emotions of 9/11 as anything that gets built where the Twin Towers once stood.

—*Russell Platt*

SWANN
Oct. 7 at 2:30: The house holds its second annual auction of drawings and etchings by Al Hirschfeld. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Oct. 6 and Oct. 9 at 8: The magnificent Olga Borodina takes the title role in **"Carmen,"** with Neil Shicoff singing Don José, Hei-Kyung Hong as Micaëla, and Ildar Abdrazakov as Escamillo; James Levine, beginning a very busy week at the house, conducts. ♦ Oct. 7 at 8: After years of problems, Ben Heppner's voice has finally returned to its full power: the tenor, once again large of frame, sings the title role of **"Otello"** with a lyrical, preternatural ease that belies the difficulty of the most challenging tenor role in all of Italian opera. Barbara Frittoli is his Desdemona, with Carlo Guelfi singing Iago; Levine. ♦ Oct. 8 and Oct. 11 at 8: Julie Taymor's long-awaited production of **"Die Zauberflöte,"** with Dorothea Röschmann, L'ubica Vargicová, Matthew Polenzani, Rodion Pogossov, Julien Robbins, and Kwangchul Youn (in his début, as Sarastro); Levine. ♦ Oct. 9 at 12:30: **"Die Walküre,"** with Olga Sergeeva, Adrianne Pieczonka (as Sieglinde), Yvonne Naef, Plácido Domingo, Mikhail Kit (as Wotan), and Stephen Milling; Valery Gergiev. ♦ Oct. 12 at 6:30: With Margaret Jane Wray replacing Pieczonka. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

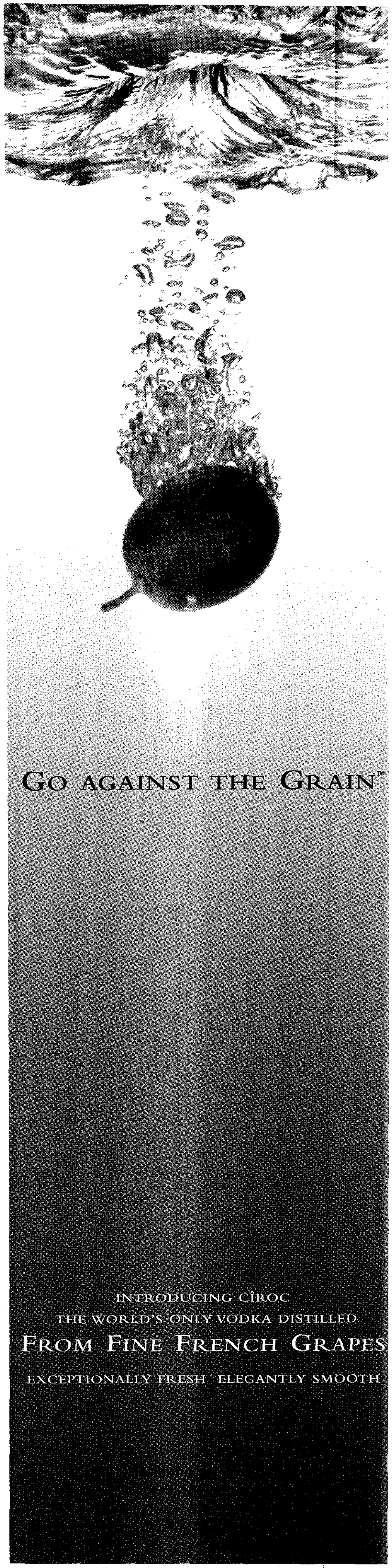
NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Oct. 6 at 7:30, Oct. 8 at 8, and Oct. 10 at 1:30: Mark Morris's popular production of **"Platée,"** Jean-Philippe Rameau's 1745 satiric opera, returns to City Opera. The impressive cast includes Christine Brandes, Lisa Saffer, and Jean-Paul Fouchécourt; Daniel Beckwith conducts. ♦ Oct. 7 at 7:30 and Oct. 9 at 8: **"La Rondine,"** Puccini's sole operetta, includes the beloved aria "Chi il bel sogno di Doretta." Pamela Armstrong, Angela Turner Wilson, Gerard Powers, and Tracey Welborn lead the cast, in Lotfi Mansouri's charming Second Empire production; Stephen Lord. ♦ Oct. 9 at 1:30: **"La Bohème,"** with Angela Marambio, Julianne Borg, Jorge Antonio Pita, and Grant Youngblood; Steven White. ♦ Oct. 12 at 7:30: With memories of the Met's John Dexter production of **"Dialogues of the Carmelites"** still lingering favorably in the minds of hundreds of New York operagoers, City Opera makes its own claim to Poulenc's melodramatic masterpiece. Rinat Shaham, Gwynne Geyer, Joyce Castle, Eugenie Grunewald, Sarah Coburn, Matthew Chellis, and Jake Gardner are featured in the ensemble cast of Tazewell Thompson's production, which débuted at Glimmerglass in 2003; George Manahan. (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Lorin Maazel, always eager to promote young violin talent, plays host to Sayaka Shoji, who will make her Philharmonic début playing Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 in Avery Fisher Hall—the prelude to a tour with the orchestra in her home country, Japan. The all-Prokofiev program includes two high-impact works, a suite from "Romeo and Juliet" and the Fifth Symphony, Op. 100. (212-875-5656. Oct. 7 at 7:30 and Oct. 8-9 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach leads his orchestra in the opening night of the Carnegie Hall season: an all-Strauss program with two glamorous guests, Renée Fleming (singing the "Four Last Songs") and Yo-Yo Ma (playing the solo cello part in "Don Quixote"). (212-247-7800. Oct. 6 at 7.)

NEW YORK EARLY MUSIC CELEBRATION
Some highlights from the festival's final concerts, all performed by musicians from the greater New York area. Oct. 6 at 8: The Choir of the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola teams up with the sackbuts, shawms, and cornetti of the Renaissance band Piffaro to offer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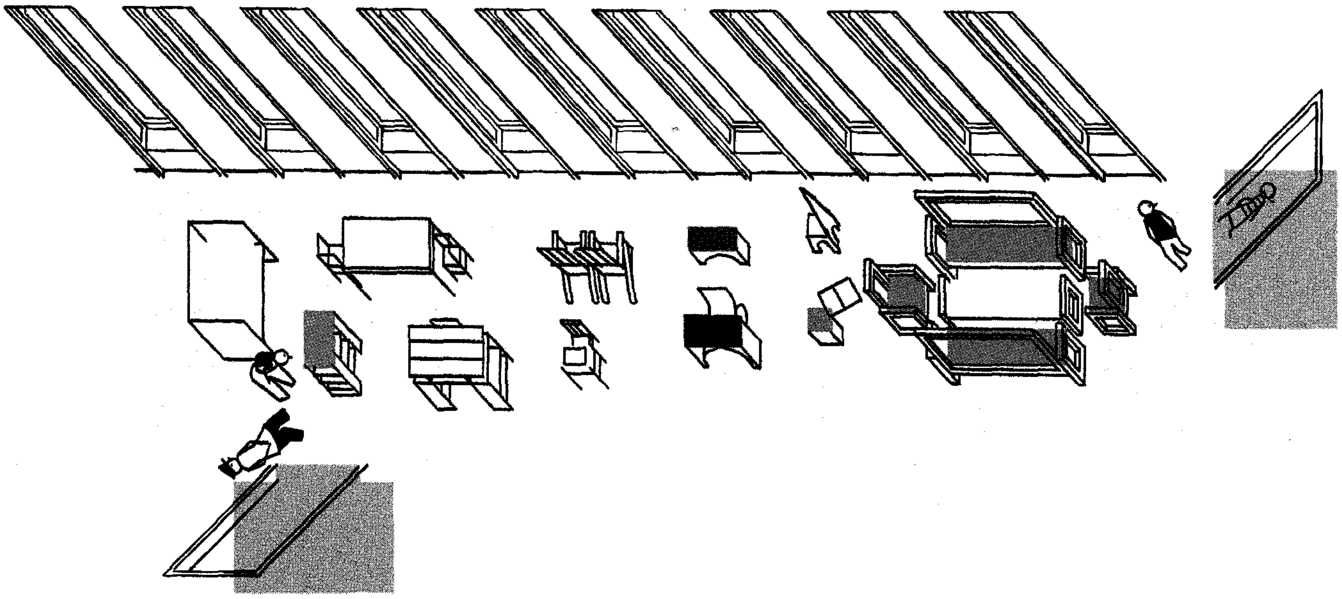
works by Francisco Guerrero. (Park Ave. at 84th St.) ♦ Oct. 10 at 3: The instrumental group Rebel, a genuine jewel of the New York scene, expands to orchestral dimensions to join the Choir of Trinity Church for concert performances of two English operatic masterworks, Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" and Blow's "Venus and Adonis." (Broadway at Wall St.) ♦ Oct. 10 at 8: The Choir of the Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch brings down the curtain on the festival with "As It Pleases," an evening of Mass settings by Dufay, Josquin ("L'Homme Armé," one of the iconic works of the Renaissance), and LeJeune. (West End Ave. at 87th St.) (212-280-0330. For a complete schedule of concerts and recitals, visit www.nyemc.org.)



"Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread," at the Cooper Hewitt (see Art).

LAURENT CILLUFFO

ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS
No one ever accused George Steel, Miller Theatre's intendant, of a lack of ambition; this week he does an end run around the New York Early Music Celebration by bringing in the venerable London ensemble (with the American pianist Christopher O'Riley) for "Bach and the Classical Concerto," an evening of works by J. S. Bach (including the Concerto for Two Violins), C. P. E. Bach, and Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major). (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Oct. 7 at 8.)

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE
As part of the World Financial Center's "Splendor of Florence" festival, the Holocaust-memorial museum opens its Safra Hall for a concert devoted to music by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, the Hollywood refugee composer whose music reflects both the strength of his Jewish roots as well as the luxuriance of the Florentine culture in which he was raised. The highlight is the seldom heard "Sacred Service for the Sabbath Eve" (1943), performed by the Riverside Choral Society and the cantors Raphael Frieder and Shimon Craimer, conducted by Patrick Gardner. (36 Battery Pl. 646-437-4202. Oct. 10 at 2:30.)

MONTREAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
James Conlon conducts the elegant Quebec ensemble (and their excellent chorus) in an all-Russian program: Rachmaninoff's Poe cantata, "The Bells"; Shostakovich's "The Execution of Stepan Razin"; and a suite of choruses by Mussorgsky. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 10 at 3.)

RECITALS

TERRY RILEY'S "SUN RINGS"
Commissioned by the NASA Arts Program, no less, the blissed-out minimalist master's new work combines the playing of the Kronos Quartet, the singing of the Dessoff Choirs, psychedelic visual imagery by Willie Williams, and recordings of sounds from deep space. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. Oct. 6 and Oct. 8-9 at 7:30.)

AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM
A selection of Hugo Wolf's "Mörike Lieder," sung by seasoned veterans (Marni Nixon and Paul Sperry) and talented newcomers (including the baritone Thomas Meglioranza). (11 E. 52nd St. Oct. 6 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300, ext. 222.)

"THE LEONIADE"
Symphony Space offers its tribute to the pianist Leon Fleisher, who has returned, gloriously, to playing with both hands. Oct. 7 at 8: Fleisher joins WNYC's John Schaefer for conversation and plays selections from his newly released album, "Two Hands." ♦ Oct. 9 at 11 A.M.: A twelve-hour marathon of the Beethoven Piano Sonatas, performed by such current and former Fleisher students as Jonathan Biss, Reiko Uchida, and Xak Bjerken. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400.)

LARK QUARTET
The four women of the Lark (headed by the violinist Maria Bachmann) offer an evening of Beethoven (including the Quartet in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 131, and the "Harp" Quartet, Op. 74). (Hunter College, Park Ave. at 69th St. 212-772-4448. Oct. 8 at 7:30.)

MILLER THEATRE
The English pianist and composer Michael Finnissy, the impish doyen of the New Complexity movement, gets a "Composer Portrait" tribute concert, courtesy of the pianist Marilyn Nonken. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Oct. 8 at 8.)

CHARLES ROSEN: "THE ROMANTIC GENERATION"
"Chopin's Last Years" begins the eminent pianist-musicologist's concert-lecture series, which will feature performances of the Berceuse in D-Flat Major and the Sonata No. 3 in B Minor. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 10 at 3, with a lecture at 1:30.)

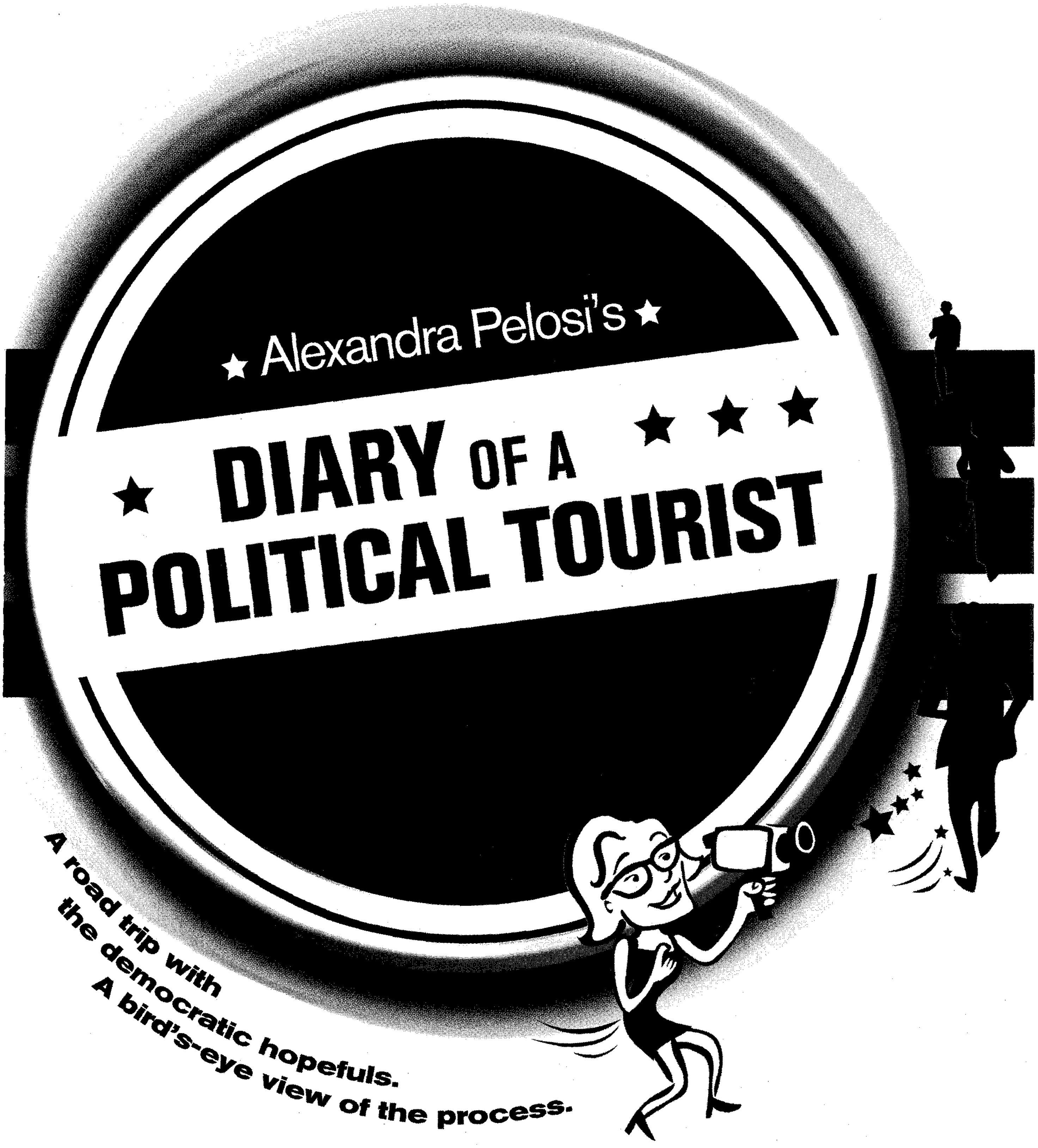
ROLANDO VILLAZON
The acclaimed Mexican tenor makes his American recital début with songs by Liszt, Strauss, Handel, Fauré, and other composers. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949. Oct. 11 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK"
In this city, access is key: no matter what your tax bracket, unless you have certain friends, you will probably never set foot inside Paul Rudolph's Upper East Side town house, a modern floating maze of interwoven horizontal and vertical spaces. And it requires connections of an entirely different sort to see the engineering underpinnings of the vast Art Deco pool in Astoria. But this weekend, a hundred of the city's architectural treasures—not just the aforementioned but also the long-off-limits High Bridge Water Tower and Eero Saarinen's curving erstwhile T.W.A. terminal at J.F.K.—will be open to visitors, turning all interested New Yorkers into insiders. (Oct. 9-10. For more information, visit www.ohny.org, or call 917-583-2398.)

READINGS
Oct. 6 at 6: Dan Burnstein offers selections from his book "Secrets of the Code: The Unauthorized Guide to the Mysteries Behind the Da Vinci Code." (Coliseum Books, 11 W. 42nd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Oct. 6 at 7:30: Warren St. John reads from "Rammer Jammer Yellow Hammer: A Journey Into the Heart of Fan Mania," his account of a season among University of Alabama football fans. (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 8th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Oct. 7 at 6: Ed Conlon, a detective in the New York City Police Department and a contributor to this magazine, reads from "Blue Blood," his book about life in the N.Y.P.D. (New York City Police Museum, 100 Old Slip, between Water and South Sts. 212-480-3100.) ♦ Oct. 11 at 8: Adrienne Rich reads from her new collection, "The School Among the Ruins: Poems 2000-2004." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

TALKS
Oct. 6 at 5: Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, the creators of the Broadway musical "Avenue Q," discuss their work. (The Drama Book Shop, 240 W. 40th St. For reservations, call 212-944-0595, ext. 417.) ♦ Oct. 7 at 6:30: Harold Evans marks the publication of "They Made America," his history of invention in this country, by talking with a few contemporary innovators, including the media mogul Ted Turner, the filmmaker Martin Scorsese, and Fred Smith, the founder of FedEx. Portions of the four-part P.B.S. series of the same name, which will be broadcast starting Nov. 8, will also be screened. (Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St. For more information, call 917-250-4232.) ♦ Oct. 12 at 6: Noah Feldman, a professor at the New York University School of Law who helped write the new constitution in Iraq, talks about democracy and Islam. (Theresa Lang Center, New School, 55 W. 13th St. 212-229-5488.) ♦ Oct. 12 at 7:30: Dan Barber, the chef at Blue Hill at Stone Barns, Mollie Katzen, the author of the "Moosewood Cookbook," Joan Dye Gussow, the author of "This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader," and Tod Murphy, the founder of the Farmers Diner, in Vermont, discuss biodiversity and sustainable dining. A resource fair featuring information on the subject starts at 6. (LeFrak Theatre, American Museum of Natural History, 77th St. between Columbus Ave. and Central Park W. For more information, call 212-496-3423.)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MOVIES OPENING

ARNA'S CHILDREN
A documentary about a group of Palestinian boys who participated in a West Bank theatre project in the mid-nineties. In English, Hebrew, and Arabic. Opening Oct. 8. (Quad Cinema.)

AROUND THE BEND
A father (Christopher Walken) tries to reconnect with the son (Josh Lucas) he abandoned, in a drama written and directed by Jordan Roberts. With Michael Caine. Opening Oct. 8. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

THE CARD PLAYER
A new horror film from Dario Argento, in which a policewoman plays high-risk games of Internet poker with a sadistic murderer. Opening Oct. 8. (Pioneer Theatre.)

THE CHILD I NEVER WAS
Kai S. Peck directed this true-life story of the teen-age German serial killer Jürgen Bartsch. In German. Opening Oct. 8. (Quad Cinema.)

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS
An adaptation of Buzz Bissinger's nonfiction book about a Texas high-school football team. Directed by Peter Berg. With Billy Bob Thornton, Lucas Black, and Derek Luke. Opening Oct. 8.

PRIMER
Shane Carruth wrote and directed this independent drama, in which he plays a scientist who invents a time-travel device. Opening Oct. 8.

RAISE YOUR VOICE
A tween film with Hilary Duff as a young girl who attends a performing-arts academy in Los Angeles. Directed by Sean McNamara. Opening Oct. 8.

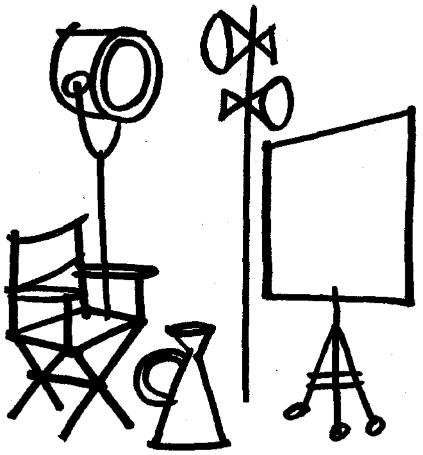
SILENT WATERS
Sabiha Sumar's film dramatizes the changing lives of a middle-aged widow and her son as nineteen-seventies Pakistan becomes increasingly fundamentalist. In Punjabi. Opening Oct. 8. (Cinema Village.)

STAGE BEAUTY
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 8.

TARNATION
Jonathan Caouette's début film is a documentary about his Texas childhood and his mentally ill mother. Opening Oct. 6. (Film Forum.)

TAXI
A cabdriver (Queen Latifah) helps a rookie cop (Jimmy Fallon) solve crimes, in a comedy directed by Tim Story. Opening Oct. 8.

VERA DRAKE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 10.



VODKA LEMON
A widower watches over his alcoholic son and pursues a woman he meets on the bus, in a drama set in Armenia. Directed by Hiner Saleem. In Armenian, Russian, and Kurdish. Opening Oct. 8. (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

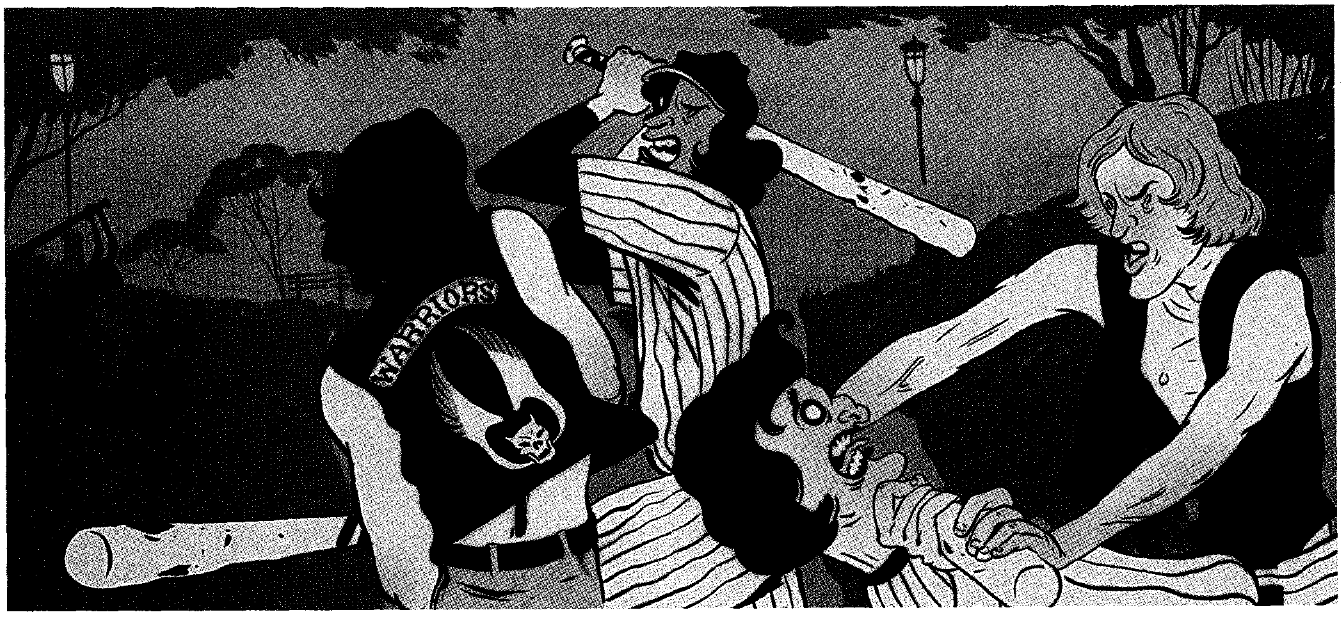
FILM NOTES

THE BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET
A mute alien with telepathic powers crash-lands near Ellis Island and finds a new home in Harlem over the course of this modest, likable parable about the perils of illegal immigration. The lead actor, Joe Morton, verges on delivering a great silent-comedy performance; he imbues the part with an aroused, superconscious innocence, whether he's hanging out with the habitués of a bar (his funniest saloon-mate is the saturnine Bill Cobbs) or wooing a beautiful singer (Dee Dee Bridgewater). John Sayles, the film's writer-director, and David Strathairn show up as two Men in Black, intergalactic bounty hunters on the alien's trail. Their stiff-necked drollery and the contortions they put Morton through make you realize how much the rest of the movie aches for slapstick invention. The compensations include Sayles's usual sprinkling of well-observed vignettes, such as the Brother's encounter with a speed-hungry video-game freak, and the cinematographer Ernest Dickerson's color-saturated vision of eighties New York. Originally released in 1984.—*Michael Sragow* (Moving Image; Oct. 10.)

A DIRTY SHAME
In John Waters's latest Baltimore raunchfest, the always welcome Johnny Knoxville stars as Ray-Ray, a tow-truck driver who saves concussion victims by liberating their libidos. Tracey Ullman is the repressed housewife who becomes his disciple. As the awakened townsfolk speak of carnal Rapture and search for the last untried sex act, Waters delivers a full-out burlesque. The film is winningly nostalgic in the way it harkens back to a time when sexual provocations could be truly transgressive, but the broad lampooning of the Christian community seems dated. Still, Waters's anarchic energy never flags, and he hasn't become cynical. With Selma Blair and Chris Isaak.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, and Lincoln Square.)

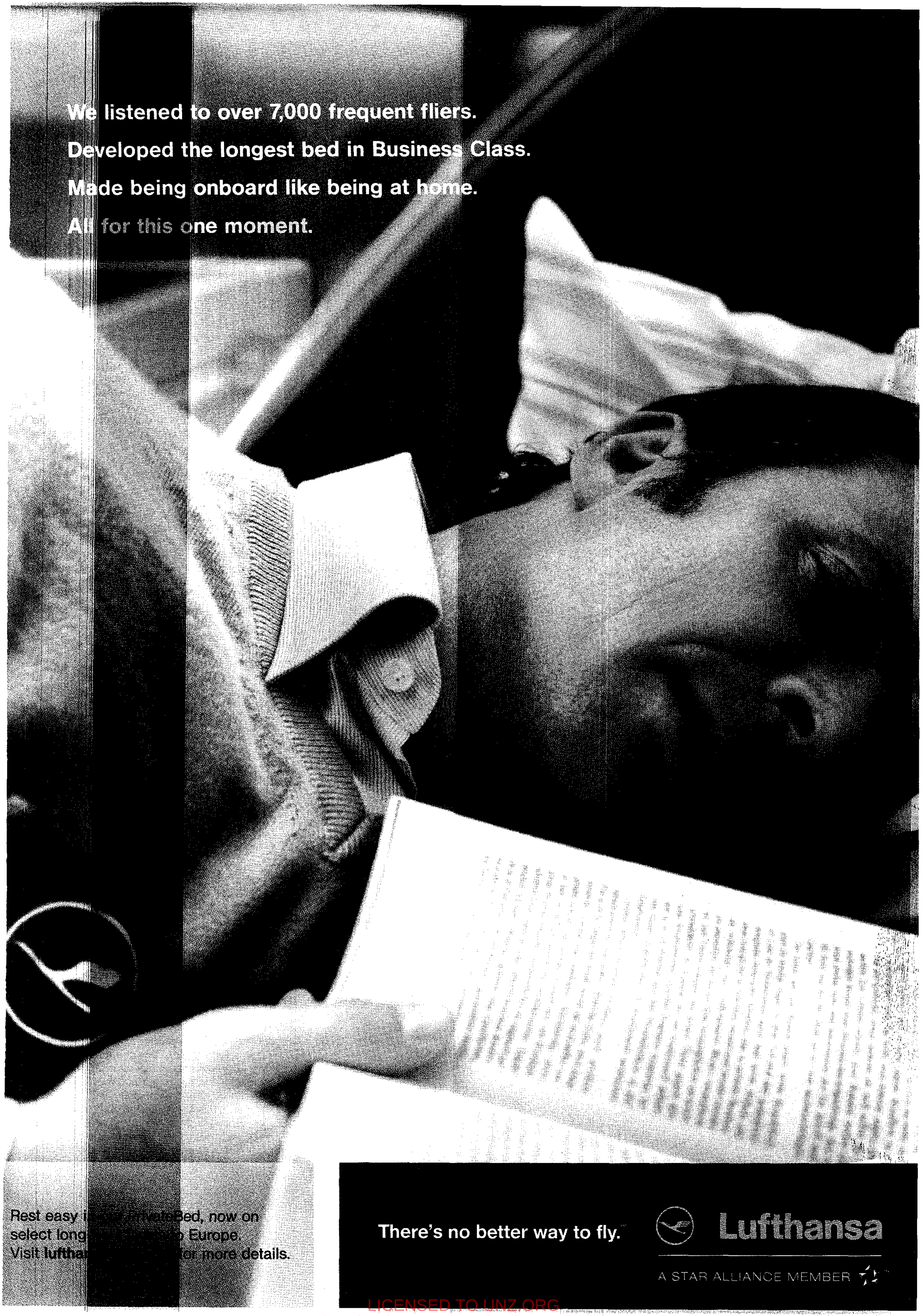
THE FORGOTTEN
An overly earnest Julianne Moore stars in this conspiracy thriller about a woman who is told that she never had the son she's grieving for. The movie begins as an inviting mix of emotional confusion and red herrings as Moore attempts to uncover the truth while also questioning her sanity. But when the story moves into the realm of the supernatural, the tension ends and the overdone special effects smother the actors. Directed by Joseph Ruben.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

HEAVEN'S GATE
Michael Cimino's 1980 treatment of the Johnson County War was an epic fiasco and a watershed in movie history, ending the brief era when American directors could expect to function as auteurs. The bloody 1892 conflict between the wealthy cattle ranchers who took over the Wyoming range and the smaller farmers who often thieved off their stock was an age of moral ambiguity on America's frontier. Cimino reduces everything to a simple case of plutocrats bullying immigrants and spends the first half of his two-hundred-and-nineteen-minute running time depicting the saucy madam Isabelle Huppert bouncing between the Harvard-educated Kris Kristofferson and the rough-and-tumble gunslinger Christopher Walken. Throughout, Cimino operates more like a visual anthologist than a visionary director. There's a "McCabe and Mrs. Miller" bordello vignette, a "Great Northfield Minnesota Raid" baseball match, and so on. There's also a roller-skating scene that includes roller-fiddling. Not until after the intermission do the guns start blasting. "What one loves in life are the things that fade" went the flossy ad line; all the movie really says is that the people one loves in life are sure to die.—*M.S.* (Film Forum; Oct. 8-12.)



ZOHAR LAZAR

At Moving Image, Walter Hill's 1979 gangland fantasia, "The Warriors," screens as part of the subway-centennial retrospective.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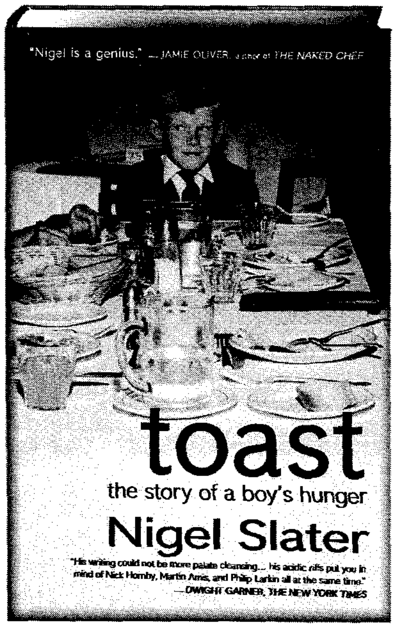
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HERO

The Chinese director Zhang Yimou, having previously worked on a restrained scale, decides to go symphonic. Hence the broad thrusts of this movie, which is set two thousand years ago and is designed to show that, at a time when other modern civilizations were still mud-bound, China was putting the final touches on the process of governing by martial arts. The pitiless leader of the Qin kingdom welcomes a young official (Jet Li) who has allegedly killed off three notable assassins, thus insuring peace in the land. His story does not ring true, and we are duly led through a variety of competing versions, each of them shot in different colors, under different skies. The result is not so much a historical epic as a kind of highly determined ballet: dreamy with bloodless violence, relying less on shades of character than on magnificence of gesture, and closer to the Michael Powell of "The Red Shoes" or "Tales of Hoffmann," say, than to the strivings of David Lean. With the unflappable Maggie Cheung. Cinematography by Christopher Doyle. In Mandarin.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 9/6/04.) (Battery Park 11, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

I ♥ HUCKABEES

David O. Russell's new satire is an authentic disaster peppered with many odd and brilliant moments. The characters, skittering along the edges of the frame, speak only about Big Ideas, say everything four times, quarrel at the drop of a non sequitur, and have sex in uncomfortable places. The hero, one Albert Markovski (Jason Schwartzman), is the head of an open-spaces conservation group, and he makes a deal with a rising young executive (Jude Law) at Huckabees, a superstore chain, to preserve some woods. Yet Albert, a surly little hysteric, feels lost, so he hires two "existential detectives" (Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin) to find out what's wrong with him. The true existentialist, however, is Caterine Vauban (Isabelle Huppert), a sexy *philosophe* in a limo who believes that life (as it says on her business card) is "cruelty, manipulation, meaninglessness." She and Albert make love on a log. There's much more, all of it devoted to a quarrel between two philosophical viewpoints—that everything is connected and that everything is separate. Russell embraces both sides—there are messy scenes in which everyone talks at once and saner moments, when the eccentricities of the individual characters stand out. With Mark Wahlberg, who is touching and funny as a fireman with nothing on his mind but petroleum. Jeff Baena worked on the garrulous screenplay with Russell.—*David Denby* (Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII.)

INFERNAL AFFAIRS

Some viewers have found themselves challenged by the intricate plot of this film, but anybody used to disentangling an entire bowl of noodles should have no problem. What we have is a little mole-on-mole action, revolving around a couple of Hong Kong cops (Tony Leung and Andy Lau). One works undercover, reporting from the entourage of a drug lord (Eric Tsang). The other works openly for the police department, but secretly as a snitch for the same villain. Neither policeman knows what the other looks like, and it takes a flurry of nervous pursuits and rooftop encounters before the scales fall from their eyes. The movie presents itself as a stack of character studies, but the leads are constructed from layers of impassive cool, and the roles for women—a shrink, an old flame—are comically fleeting. What makes the picture work is its unflagging devotion to the play of gleam and shadow: to a vision of Hong Kong as a natural hotbed of treason and double cross. For those who need a fix of further confusion, two sequels are ready and waiting in the wings. With Anthony Wong as the police chief, who suffers an amazing fall from grace. In Cantonese.—*A.L.* (9/20/04) (Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

MARIA FULL OF GRACE

In this superbly poised independent film, Maria (Catalina Sandino Moreno), a willful seventeen-year-old, unhappily pregnant and stuck in a factory job, agrees to serve as a "mule," carrying in her stomach little pellets of heroin from her native Colombia to New Jersey. Joshua Marston, a thirty-five-year-old N.Y.U. film-school graduate, nosed around Colombia and New York's immigrant neighborhoods before beginning to shoot "Maria," his first full-length feature, and the way he dramatized the material seems instinctively right: he goes step by step, detail by detail, emotion by emotion, eliding nothing, exaggerating nothing. In his calm and lucid way, Marston has made one of the emblematic coming-to-America stories of our time.—*D.D.* (7/26/04) (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Sunshine Cinema, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

In 1952, a medical student called Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Gael García Bernal) teamed up with his friend Alberto Granado (Rodrigo de la Serna), a biochemist, and journeyed eight thousand miles through South America. The tale of their travels is the basis for Walter Salles's ravishing, suggestive, and faintly superfluous film. Both young men are of middle-class Argentinean stock, and Ernesto has a girlfriend so rich and beautiful that her family's estate, as Alberto notes, looks like Switzerland. If he had stayed with her, Latin-American history might have taken a more placid turn; instead, Ernesto remounted his motorbike, headed into the Andes, and began the determined process of turning into Che Guevara. The film is sprinkled with gestures toward that future, especially when the two men work at a leper colony on the Amazon, but foreshadowing doesn't always convince; the sequence in which they meet a pair of wandering Communists on the road and drink in the saga of their suffering is biographically accurate, yet it feels dramatically forced. In the end, the film might best be read as a high-class, episodic buddy picture, with the tubby, more skeptical Alberto (he's like a young Robert Donat) observing with interest the spark of indignation—and the air of chaste reticence—in his impossibly handsome pal.—*A.L.* (9/27/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

It is only natural to be scared of zombies, and to prevent them from laying waste to your home. A more relaxing approach, however, is to be bored and vaguely annoyed by them, or, better still, not to notice them in the first place. This is the premise of Edgar Wright's British comedy, which may be responsible for kicking off a new and specialized genre of slacker horror. Shaun (Simon Pegg) lives a supremely uneventful life, which revolves around his girlfriend (Kate Ashfield), his mother (Penelope Wilton), and, above all, his local pub. This gentle routine is threatened when the dead return to life and make strenuous attempts to snack on ordinary Londoners. The finale, in which the pub turns into an Alamo, is the bloodiest, most orthodox, and least witty part of the movie; far sharper are the early scenes in which Shaun wanders happily to the local store along a battered, zombie-dotted street and pulps his attackers with a cricket bat. The central joke is so snappy and well sustained that you barely catch sight of the ominous vision on offer: a country that already feels like death.—*A.L.* (9/27/04) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Six-plex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SILVER CITY

A despairing film from John Sayles—an open-air, Colorado-style noir, in which a fallible but decent ex-investigative reporter (Danny Huston) rediscovers his soul but is unable to prevent a powerful local political family, the Pilagers, from polluting lakes, gutting regulatory restraints on real-estate development, and, in general, running roughshod over Colorado's tender beauty. Sayles's camera ranges with great mobility over political-strategy rooms and construction sites, but, dramatically, he meanders, never working up a full head of steam. The movie feels like "Chinatown" without the malice, the rigorous design, or the narrative epiphanies. Among its incidental pleasures, however, is Chris Cooper's brilliant imitation of George W. Bush holding a news conference. Cooper plays the Pilager scion, Richard Pilager, known as Dim Dickie, a brainless fellow running for governor. With Tim Roth, Maria Bello, Billy Zane, and, as a self-destructive Pilager heiress who sits around and practices archery, Daryl Hannah.—*D.D.* (Cinema Village, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

At first, it might seem curious that the writer-director Kerry Conran chose to use his digital wizardry to recreate the look of Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" and other Expressionist films, but the nineteen-twenties were a time when the language of film was in a fluid, experimental stage, as directors refined their use of montage, transparency, and camera effects. Now, with the increased realism of computer-generated images, directors like Conran seem propelled by a new sense of possibility about what can be accomplished onscreen. In any event, "Sky Captain" is an impressive technical achievement, seamlessly integrating A-list actors into an imaginary world—only, at times, one wishes that this world weren't so dark (literally). Would Conran's computer renderings seem fake in full daylight, or is his commitment to noir just a shade too extreme? His dedication to the celluloid past, however, is beyond question—among the plentiful homages, the immortal Laurence Olivier has a cameo from the crypt. The story is a pastiche of classic sci-fi adventures, with Jude Law as an aviator and Gwyneth Paltrow as a reporter on the trail of a doomsday cult. If the movie is powered more by its rousing, brassy score than by its emotional connections, the slack is taken up by the continuous revelation of Conran's visual inventions.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

VANITY FAIR

In the hands of the Indian-born director Mira Nair, Thackeray's story of social climbing and tumbling emerges as strong meat, sauced to the point of surfeit by the heat of human greed. Becky Sharp (Reese Witherspoon) hasn't got a penny to her name, or a saving speck of conscience, but she has everything else, and, thus equipped, she begins her climb: a spell in the bosom of the Sedley family, courtesy of her friend Amelia (Romola Garai); a grim sojourn in the moldering mansion of the Crawleys; marriage to the dashing Rawdon (James Purefoy), the romance of which soon falters for lack of funds; and, by way of a Faustian finale, the demonic embrace of Lord Steyne (Gabriel Byrne), for whom money has bought a living death. Nair packs the frame with detail, and she never misses a chance to remind us just how much of the wealth of the early nineteenth century was garnered abroad, at the cost of colonial blood and sweat; but this argument comes to flood the drama, until the tale of Becky herself is in danger of being swamped. The novel thrums with incident, like a reporter's notebook, but onscreen that sort of frenzy is too much; viewers like to know what, or whom, to root for, and without that knowledge they feel lost. With an apparently endless list of British actors, including Jim Broadbent, Bob Hoskins, Eileen Atkins, Geraldine McEwan, and (struggling with the slippery role of George Osborne) Jonathan Rhys Meyers.—*A.L.* (9/6/04) (Battery Park 11, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE WARRIORS

Walter Hill's 1979 spectacle takes its story from Xenophon's "Anabasis" and its style from the taste of the modern urban dispossessed—in neon signs, graffiti, and the thrill of gaudiness. The film enters into the spirit of urban-male tribalism and the feelings of kids who believe that they own the streets because they keep other kids out of them. In this vision, cops and kids are all there is, and the worst crime is to be chicken. It has—in visual terms—the kind of impact that "Rock Around the Clock" had when it was played behind the titles of "Blackboard Jungle." The action runs from night until dawn, and most of it is in crisp, bright Day-Glo colors against the terrifying New York blackness; the figures stand out like a jukebox in a dark bar. There's a night-blooming, psychedelic shine to the whole baroque movie.—*Pauline Kael* (Moving Image; Oct. 9.)

WIMBLEDON

The fine actor Paul Bettany ("Master and Commander," "A Beautiful Mind") is done in by this witless

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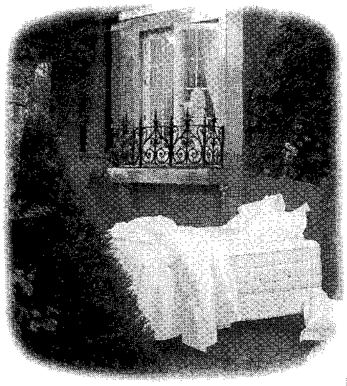

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romantic comedy, played out on England's most prestigious courts. A miscast Kirsten Dunst stumbles as the upcoming tennis star who inspires Bettany to radically improve his game, and the script, by a trio of screenwriters, is anything but agile. Tennis clichés (the overbearing father, the long-shot contender) abound, and the film's characters are as underdrawn as the film is overpopulated. Clearly designed to be another British ensemble hit, this film, directed by Richard Loncraine, finds the net.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

DEADLINE
Quad Cinema.
DIG!
Sunshine Cinema.
GOING UPRIVER: THE LONG WAR OF JOHN KERRY
BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.
NAPOLEON DYNAMITE
(6/28/04)
Battery Park 11, Cinema Village, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and 64th and 2nd.
SHARK TALE
Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.
THE YES MEN
Sunshine Cinema.

At Walter Reade, "Intimate Confessions of a Chinese Courtesan."

TOMER HANUKA

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182).
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Cinema Tropical." Oct. 8 at 7:30: "To the Left of the Father" (2002, Luiz Fernando Carvalho; in Portuguese). ♦ Through Oct. 11: The Subway Centennial Film Festival. Oct. 9-10 at 1: "The 7 Train: An Immigrant Journey" (2000, Hye Jung Park and J. T. Takagi). ♦ Oct. 9 at 2: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Oct. 9 at 4:30: "The Warriors" (†). ♦ Oct. 10 at 2: "The Brother from Another Planet" (†). ♦ Oct. 10 at 4: "Subway Riders" (1981, Amos Poe). ♦ Oct. 11 at 2: "Coming to America" (1988, John Landis). ♦ Repertory nights. Oct. 9-10 at 6:30: "Floating Weeds" (1959, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—World première. Oct. 6 at 9 and Oct. 7-12 at 7 and 9: "The Whisper of the Whistling Water" (2004, Brigitte Cornand). ♦ "Essential Cinema." Oct. 9 at 5: "Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania" (1971-72, Jonas Mekas). ♦ Oct. 10 at 5: Films by Marie Menken (1955-63).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through Oct. 17: A Mexican film festival. All films are in Spanish. Oct. 6 at 6 and 9: "Amores Perros" (2000, Alejandro Gonzáles Iñarritu). ♦ Oct. 7 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9: "The Lost Reels of Pancho Villa" (2003, Gregorio Rocha). ♦ Oct. 8 at 2 and 6:50: "Violet Perfume" (2001, Marisa Sistach). ♦ Oct. 8 at 4:30 and 9:15: "Japón" (2002, Carlos Reygadas). ♦ Oct. 9 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Ruination of Men" (2000, Arturo Ripstein). ♦ Oct. 10 at 2 and 6:50: "The Passion of Maria Elena" (2003, Mercedes Moncada Rodríguez). ♦ Oct. 10 at 4:30 and 9:15: "De la Calle" (2001, Gerardo Tort). ♦ Films by Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Oct. 11 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Small Town" (1998; in Turkish). ♦ "J. Hoberman Selects." Oct. 12 at 6:50: "Four More Years" (1972, TVTV). ♦ Oct. 12 at 9:30: "Feed" (1992, Kevin Rafferty and James Ridgeway) and "Primary" (1960, Robert Drew).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Oct. 6-7 at 1:10, 3:40, 7, and 9:30: "Burn!" (1969, Gillo Pontecorvo). ♦ Oct. 8-12 at 1:20 and 7:10: "Heaven's Gate" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Dec. 21: "Sisters: Dorléac and Deneuve." Oct. 12 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Tonight or Never" (1961, Michel Deville; in French).

THE NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL
Lincoln Center (212-875-5050)—Most screenings will be held at Alice Tully Hall. See www.filmlinc.com for details. Oct. 6 at 6 and Oct. 7 at 8:45: "Kings and Queen" (2004, Arnaud Desplechin; in French). ♦ Oct. 6 at 9:30: "Or (My Treasure)" (2004, Keren Yedaya; in Hebrew). ♦ Oct. 8-9 at 6: "Woman Is the Future of Man" (2004, Hong Sang-soo; in Korean). ♦ Oct. 8 at 9 and Oct. 9 at noon: "Vera Drake" (2004, Mike Leigh). ♦ Oct. 9 at 3: "The 10th District Court: Judicial Hearings" (2004, Raymond Depardon; in French). ♦ Oct. 9 at 9 and Oct. 10 at 2: "Bad Education" (2004, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish). ♦ Oct. 9 at midnight and Oct. 10 at 8: "House of Flying Daggers" (2004, Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin). ♦ Oct. 10 at 5 and Oct. 11 at 9:15: "The Holy Girl" (2004, Lucrecia Martel; in Spanish). ♦ Oct. 11 at 3 and Oct. 12 at 6: "Rolling Family" (2004, Pablo Trapero; in Spanish). ♦ Oct. 11 at 6 and Oct. 12 at 9: "The World" (2004, Jia Zhangke; in Mandarin). ♦ The films of the Marshall Plan. Oct. 11 at 12:30: "A New Deal for Europe" (1949-50).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. Oct. 8-9: "Ghost in the Shell" (1995, Mamoru Oshii; in Japanese).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Oct. 13: "Elegance, Passion, and Cold Hard Steel: A Tribute to Shaw Brothers Studios." All films are in Cantonese. Oct. 6 at 4: "The Kingdom and the Beauty" (1958, Li Han-hsiang). ♦ Oct. 6 at 6 and Oct. 7 at 4:15: "The House of 72 Tenants" (1973, Chu Yuan). ♦ Oct. 7 at 6:15, Oct. 8 at 9, and Oct. 9 at 5:30: "Intimate Confessions of a Chinese Courtesan" (1972, Chu). ♦ Oct. 7 at 8:15, Oct. 8 at 4, and Oct. 9 at 12:45: "Hong Kong Nocturne" (1966, Inoue Umetsugu). ♦ Oct. 8 at 6:30 and Oct. 11 at 4:30: "Love Without End" (1961, Doe Chin). ♦ Oct. 9 at 11 A.M.: "Clans of Intrigue" (1976, Chu). ♦ Oct. 9 at 3:10 and Oct. 12 at 6:30: "Heroes Two" (1973, Zhang Che). ♦ Oct. 12 at 4 and 8:45: "Blood Brothers" (1973, Che). ♦ Special events. Oct. 6 at 8:15: "Macunaima" (1969, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade; in Portuguese). ♦ Oct. 9 at 7:30 and 10:15: "Miles Electric: A Different Kind of Blue" (2004, Murray Lerner). ♦ Oct. 10 at noon and Oct. 11 at 7: "Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson" (2004, Ken Burns). ♦ The "Infernal Affairs" trilogy. Oct. 10 at 5: "Infernal Affairs" (†). ♦ Oct. 10 at 7: "Infernal Affairs 2" (2003, Andrew Lau and Alan Mak; in Cantonese). ♦ Oct. 10 at 9:30: "Infernal Affairs 3" (2004, Lau and Mak; in Cantonese).

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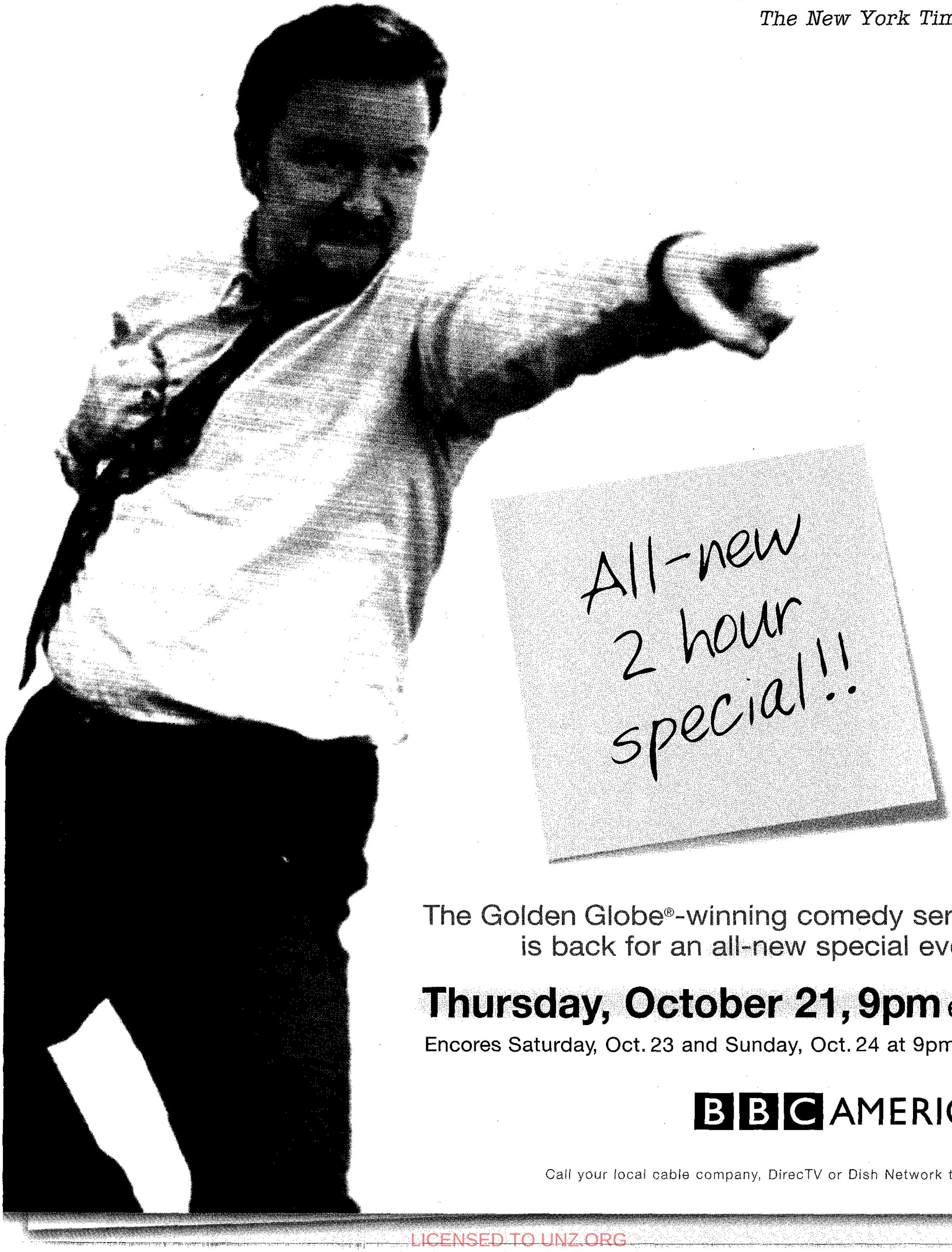

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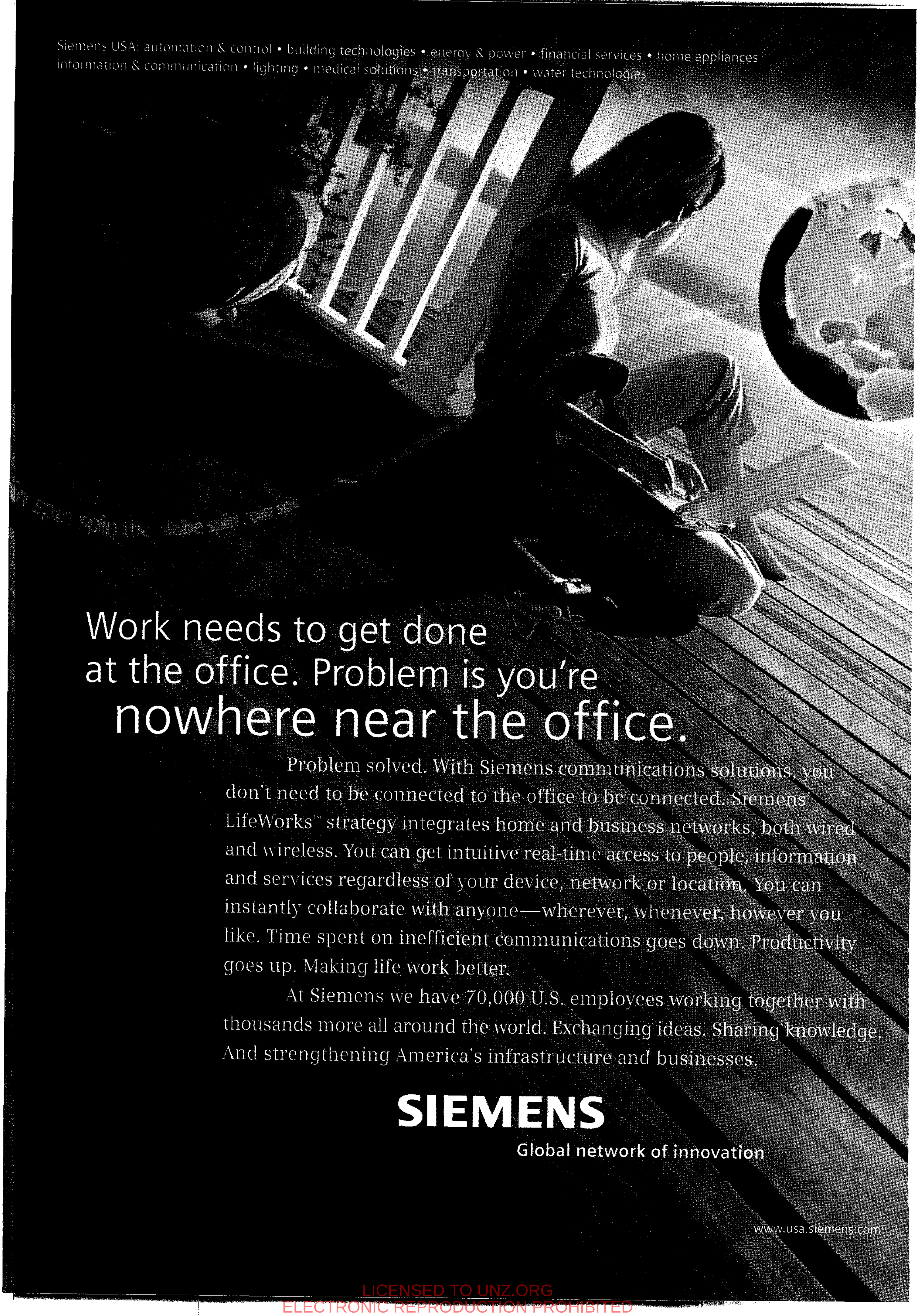
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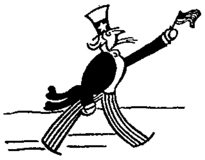
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
WINNING

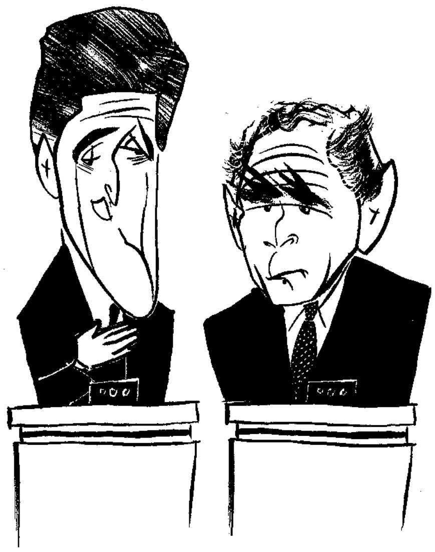


About a third of the way into last Thursday's Presidential debate, the moderator, Jim Lehrer, asked President George W. Bush to clarify a comment that he had made the previous month. Bush had used the term "miscalculation" in connection with American plans for a post-invasion Iraq, and Lehrer wanted to know what he meant by that. It turned out that the President had been referring not to the ferocity of Iraqi insurgents, or to the difficulties of reconstructing the country, or to the steadily mounting death toll, but to the extraordinary efficiency of the American military operation there.

"Because Tommy Franks did such a great job in planning the operation, we moved rapidly, and a lot of the Baathists and Saddam loyalists laid down their arms and disappeared, and we're fighting them now," Bush said, despite the fact that many, if not most, of the insurgents are neither. "And it's hard work. I understand how hard it is. I get the casualty reports every day. I see on the TV screens how hard it is." The President went on, "I'm optimistic. See, I think you can be realistic and optimistic at the same time."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Four years ago, Bush campaigned on a slogan borrowed from his home town of Midland, Texas—"The sky's the limit"—and he seems, if anything, to have grown more attached to it the more events conspire against him. Last week's news out of Iraq was typical. American forces launched an offensive in Samarra after negotiations to allow them back into the city failed. On a videotape provided by the kidnappers who had recently beheaded two Americans, the British hostage Kenneth Bigley pleaded for his life from inside a cage. A private security firm reported that insurgents had launched two thousand three hundred and sixty-eight separate attacks over the previous thirty days, including two hundred and seventy-two using rocket-propelled grenades. Just hours before the debate began, three car bombs went off near an American military convoy in Baghdad, killing at least forty people, most of them children. (The children, who were at a celebration for the opening of a new sewage-treatment plant, were waiting for American soldiers to hand out candy.) "We've climbed the mighty mountain," the President intoned in his closing remarks of the debate. "I see the valley below, and it's a valley of peace."



As the Presidential race enters its final month, it is Bush's posture toward the war in Iraq, almost more than the war itself, that has become the campaign's central issue. A few days before the debate, Fox's Bill O'Reilly asked the President whether, if he could do it all over again, he would still land on the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln and speak before a banner that read "Mission Accomplished." "Absolutely," Bush replied. (Even O'Reilly seemed taken aback. "You would?" he asked.) As one justification for the war after another has evaporated—a resourceful college student recently counted twenty-three different reasons that the Administration had offered at one point or another—the President has finally found a way to transcend the whole problem: leadership means never having to have second thoughts. "If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy," Bush said on Thursday. "That's not going to happen so long as I'm your President."

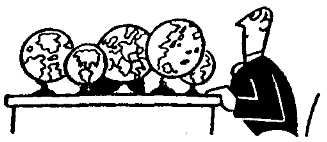
Bush's peculiar brand of realism is an opportunity for John Kerry but also, potentially, a trap. During the debate, the Senator was most eloquent when he talked about what the President has chosen not to discuss. "I don't know if he sees what's really happened out there," Kerry said at one point. "But it's getting worse by the day. More soldiers killed in June than before. More in July than June. More in August than July. More in September than in August." At another point, he identified, with un-Kerry-like concision, the fatuity of the President's reasoning: "It's one thing to be certain, but you can be certain and be wrong." (More Kerry-like, he went on to say, "It's another to be certain and be right, or to be certain and be moving in the right direction, or be certain about a principle and then learn new facts and take those new facts and put them to use in order to change and get your policy right.")

At the same time, Kerry had to insist, or at least felt that he had to insist, that the war remains winnable. When Lehrer asked him whether Americans were dying for a "mistake," the Senator quickly declared, "No," even though just a few minutes earlier he had asserted, "The President made a mistake in invading Iraq." In a deep sense, Kerry's convoluted stand reflects the genuine moral complexities of the United States' current position; whatever one thought of the President's rationale for going to war, it is hard to argue that the United States does not now have an obligation to the Iraqis to try to set their country right. In a more practical sense, Kerry's stand points to the awkwardness of his own political situation. While it may be a good idea for him to maintain that the war should be discussed honestly, it may not be such a great idea for him to actually do so.

It is a truism of American politics that the more optimistic candidate wins, and Kerry has good reason to fear joining the line of Democrats—Jimmy Carter, Michael Dukakis, Al Gore—whose careers were cut short by insufficient ebullience. The grim fact about the war in Iraq is that no one seems to know, at this point, how to stop the bloodshed. The classified National Intelligence Estimate revealed by the *Times* last month offers three possible scenarios for Iraq through the end of next year, the best being a highly tenuous stability and the worst preparations for an all-out civil war. The President's formulation notwithstanding, the one thing that is impossible is to be realistic about the situation and optimistic at the same time.

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*

VISITING DIGNITARIES
DRY RUN



Kwesi Addae, a fifty-three-year-old former political-science professor from Ghana and the founder of Pollwatch Africa, has monitored elections in half a dozen shenanigan-prone countries, including Togo, Nigeria, and Guinea-Bissau. So it's not surprising that, back in November of 2000, he paid some attention to the events that were unfolding in Florida. "We were so used to looking at the United States as a paragon of democratic virtues," he said the other day. Then came Bush v. Gore and, as the President might say, everything changed. "We caught you," Addae said, his face breaking into an impish smile. "You're no different from us." This time around, Addae, as one of twenty foreign election observers brought here this month by the left-leaning human-rights group Global Exchange, is inspecting the creaky mechanics of American democracy at close hand. He signed up for the two-week mission, he said, "out of fascination."

In Africa, Addae had seen phantom polling stations, ruling-party rent-a-mobs, ballots bought with beer. But nothing in his experience had prepared him for the iVotronic touch-screen voting system. The iVotronic is the latest in electoral technology, a light, flat-screen computer that will be used this November in parts of Florida, among other places. Addae encountered the device on the second day of the mission, at the Washington, D.C., offices of IFES, an international election-assistance group. Inside the IFES library, which was decorated with election posters from Bosnia, Bolivia, and elsewhere, the delegation was offered the chance to test the new machine.

The observers crowded around. "You're quite fortunate to be able to touch and feel the same thing that those voters will be using on Election Day," a salesman from Election Systems & Software, the machine's manufacturer, said. Addae squeezed closer for a better look. He wore an American-flag pin on the lapel of his rumpled blue blazer.

"Let's vote," Addae said. He craned his neck as two other observers took their turns at the touch screen: Neerja Chowdhury, an Indian journalist who wore a flowing red kurta and shawl, and Somsri Hananuntasuk, a petite Thai woman who, for the purposes of show-and-tell, had brought along a *joblos*, an icepick-like device used to punch ballots in Indonesia. (Hananuntasuk's next trip will be to Afghanistan, for the election on October 9th. "This one is much easier," she said.) Addae was next. He bellied up to the machine and poked at the screen. Nothing happened. Someone handed him a small cartridge—a "personalized electronic ballot," or P.E.B. Addae examined the cartridge quizzically, then fumbled as he tried to insert it into the machine. "Put it back in for just a second," an observer named David MacDonald, a former member

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—*Bruce McCall*

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of Canada's parliament, said. "Now remove it."

A ballot appeared on the screen. For the purposes of this demonstration, the election was a local one, and the candidates for mayor were all actors; for city council, hockey players; and for school board, musicians. For some reason, they were also all Canadians. "O.K.," Addae said, peering over his glasses. "I want Michael J. Fox." Passing over Neve Campbell, John Candy, and Dan Aykroyd, he touched Fox's name, and a little green check mark appeared. Addae ran his finger down the list of candidates in other races: Gordie Howe, Ken Dryden, Bryan Adams, Shania Twain, Gordon Lightfoot. "I want Bobby Orr. I want Neil Young," he said. When he was done, Addae punched a flashing red button marked "VOTE." The machine beeped twice, and a message appeared on the screen: "Your ballot has been cast. Thank you for voting."

Addae shook his head. "It's not very easy," he said. Back home, Ghanaians still vote the old-fashioned way, by writing an "X" on a paper ballot and dropping it into a box. "Thereafter, they are counted one by one, and the figures are written down and announced," he said.

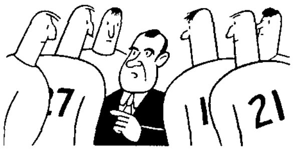
Addae was looking forward to seeing more of the United States. After an orientation in Washington, the observers would be fanning out across five states. Addae's destination was Arizona, where his itinerary included a visit with the League of Women Voters, a town-hall meeting on a Navajo reservation, and a chat with some civic-minded Mormons. At the end of the mission, the delegation would reconvene in San Francisco to write a report. "We're not pretending that we're going to make a lot of difference," Addae said. "But we'd like to see."

His biggest regret was that he would be leaving before the real voting. (Global Exchange will host a different team for the balloting; another group, consisting of representatives from the Organization for Security and Coöperation in Europe, who have been invited by the State Department, will also be on hand.) But, from what Addae saw in Washington, the United States could use some constructive criticism about the way it picks its leaders. After he was finished with the computer demonstration, he ambled across the room, where some observers were voting with paper ballots. He grabbed a ballot and filled in the bubbles next to his choices. The salesman collected twelve ballots and loaded them into a optical scanner. *Whoosh*—the ballots shot through. But there was a problem. The machine rejected five of the ballots, including Addae's. The observers had used a pen instead of a No. 2 pencil. This election observer was ready to deliver his verdict: "I am not impressed at all!"

—*Andrew Rice*

THE SPORTING SCENE

HARD GUY

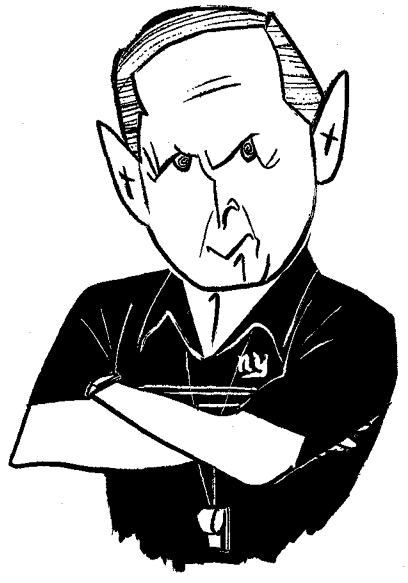


New York may be a bastion of liberalism and, in its own gruff way, a sanctuary for leniency, if no longer for licentiousness, but it has always had a soft spot for the autocrat, the unyielding hard-ass—Rudy Giuliani, Martha Stewart, Don Corleone. This is particularly true of the city's pro-sports franchises, whose most memorable (and successful) figures—the brusque Giants and Jets coach Bill Parcells, the egomaniacal Knicks coach Pat Riley, and, of course, the Boss, George Steinbrenner—have often been power-hungry taskmasters and my-way-or-the-highway Machiavellis.

Tom Coughlin, the new head coach of the Giants, is a disciplinarian cut from old Catholic-school cloth. His nicknames include Tom the Tyrant, Major Tom, the General, and the Principal (which is what he looks like). His favorite movie, needless to say, is "Patton." In a recent *Sports Illustrated* poll, current and former players voted him the worst coach in the National Football League. Three Giants have filed grievances—still pending—with their union, the Players Association, because they were fined for being a couple of minutes early to team meetings, which is, by Coughlin's accounting, late. ("Meetings start five minutes early," Coughlin has said, and, as if to confuse matters more, he has ordered the clocks in the Giants' locker room set five minutes ahead.) Last spring, several more Giants registered complaints with the union, saying that Coach Coughlin had violated off-season training restrictions with a gruelling workout schedule. (They won a two-day reprieve.) Among pro football's many Dracos, "Coughlin stands alone," a Players Association spokesman said last week.

For example, here are a few of Major Tom's rules, which he laid out in a seven-page PowerPoint presentation in August: no crossed legs; no slouching; no long hair; no beards; no jewelry; no hats (in meetings); no TV (within ninety minutes of game time); no cell phones (when Coach is around); no ankle socks (when on the field); no white socks (when on the road); no T-shirts (after hotel check-in).

"I've had friends of mine call me and say, 'God, it must be awful for you there,' " Ernie Accorsi, the Giants' general manager (and, therefore, Coughlin's commanding officer), said the other day, referring to the commotion that his new coach has caused. "No, it's not awful. It's wonderful." Coughlin had just coached the team to two consecutive victories—no small feat for the Giants, who finished in last place in 2003. Accorsi went on, "When we interviewed him the first time, I raised the question of 'Look, you come here with a reputation of a lot of rules that might become annoying to players. How do you answer that criticism?' He said the right thing, as far as I was concerned. He said, 'All I want is for them to take their jobs as seriously as I take mine when they're on the job. Other than that, as long as they live by



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"He's always on message."

• •

the rules of this country, they can do what they want.' "

Right. Well, let's say you wanted to ask some of the players and assistant coaches about all this. There are other rules to keep in mind: no assistant coaches may speak to the media; no players may speak critically about the team in public; no media may speak to quarterbacks on Wednesdays. (And don't forget the more universal rule among pro athletes: say nothing interesting or meaningful.) A reporter visited the locker room before practice last Wednesday, to inquire about Major Tom.

"Obey everything, man," Fred Robbins, a defensive tackle, said. "New coach—job to do, you gotta do it, can't have no questions about it. Whatever Coach asks me to do, I obey it."

Marques Sullivan, an offensive tackle, added, "Coach Coughlin, he's always on you, because he wants you to be the best you can be. It's not just because he's a jerk like that."

"With Coughlin, it's all good," Curtis DeLoatch, a rookie defensive back, said. "He lays down the rules. Supposedly, he's the head coach who knows all about business."

David Diehl, another offensive tackle, had his head down as he wrapped his right hand in tape. When he heard mention of the word "rules," he immediately looked up. "I'm not getting involved in that," he said. "Uh-uh. I'm not involved in that." Then he looked over at the digital clock on the wall, which read eleven-fifty-seven. (Another clock, in the back of the room, said eleven-fifty-six. Eastern Standard Time was eleven-fifty-one.) Media availability ends at noon. "Anyways, I gotta get going," he said, lumbering away.

The rules can become infectious. Back in the media room, over lunch, a couple of men began discussing the apparent decline of order and standards in other locker rooms around town. What was going on up in the Bronx, for instance? Hadn't anyone noticed that the Yankees' Tom Gordon wears a mustache—pencil-thin, but still—in clear violation of Steinbrenner's no-facial-hair edict? And over at Shea Stadium, well, veteran players like John Franco and Al Leiter have seemed at times to be exercising more authority than the manager. "The inmates have been running the asylum," one of the men said.

The reporter then walked back out toward the field to watch practice. (No helmets on the ground, no knees on the ground, no butts on the ground.) Shortly after emerging from the tunnel, he was intercepted by a sharply dressed team employee. ("You want to have someone who is disciplined in your P.R. department," Accorsi had said. "You want somebody who has self-discipline and order to his life, and isn't sloppy with his habits.")

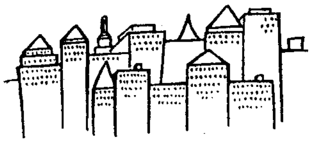
"You can't be here," the employee said. Practices, he explained, are for regular beat reporters only.

The reporter protested. "But the schedule says—"

"I don't care what the schedule says," the employee said. "It's a rule."

—Ben McGrath

POSTSCRIPT
GARDNER BOTSFORD



Every meeting with Gardner Botsford—down the hall; on a street corner, unexpectedly; at your doorway before dinner—began the same way, with your own "How *are* you, Gardner?" and his firm, upbeat "Never better!" You came to count on this and to laugh at it with other friends and colleagues of his—some of us even began to call him "Old Never Better"—and only with time did you sense how well the riposte served him, diverting attention from sadness or symptoms, encouraging the social or conversational pleasures just ahead, and also stepping off

Peak performance.

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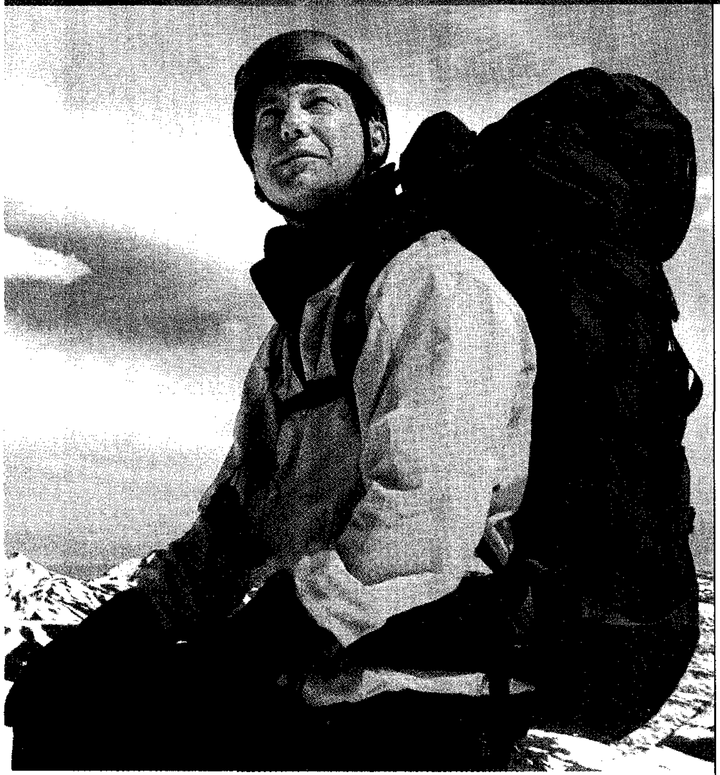

"High blood pressure grounded me and took away the life I loved. Now the only thing climbing high is me."

— **Phil McKenzie**

His wife introduced him to mountain climbing, and it changed his life. He trained and hardened his body until he could run miles with a 70-pound pack on his back. Then Phil McKenzie was diagnosed with high blood pressure. He was 45 and thought the life he loved was over. But thanks to a treatment from Novartis, Phil reduced his blood pressure in a few weeks, and soon after that, he climbed Mt. McKinley in Alaska, all 20,000 feet of it. Novartis is proud to be the innovative force that's bringing new hope and optimism to patients and their families. And today, Phil is back and on top of the world.

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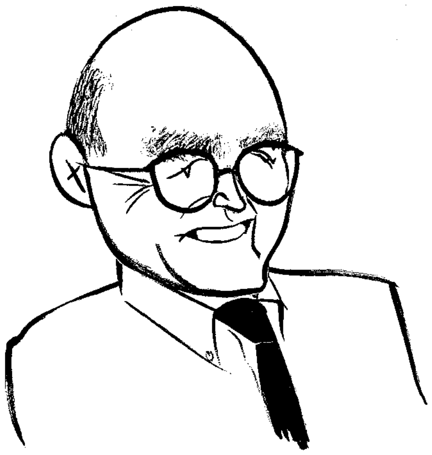
an elegant little distance away from intimacy. Botsford, who died last week at the age of eighty-seven, was an editor with this magazine for almost forty years and a continuing presence around the place in the two decades after he stepped down. His long and famously happy marriage to the *New Yorker* writer Janet Malcolm—it was the second for both—had its roots in their editor-writer attachment, begun when she was a young contributor of shopping columns, and maintained (through her nine books and ninety-odd reportorial and critical pieces) until the end. Before that, he had edited A. J. Liebling, Joseph Mitchell, Janet Flanner, Mollie Panter-Downes, Richard Rovere, Geoffrey Hellman, and dozens more of the vivid, august figures of the magazine's postwar journalistic flowering.

Hired a couple of times as a young Talk of the Town reporter (the first time didn't take) by *The New Yorker's* founding editor, Harold Ross, and lured into editing by its brilliant and idolized second, William Shawn, he rose to an easy, semi-anonymous eminence that stood in contrast with the cloistered and convoluted relationships Shawn maintained with his writers and staff and with the world. Botsford was also connected to the magazine through his stepfather, Raoul Fleischmann, *The New Yorker's* first publisher, and, one could say, through New York itself, where he grew up in the twenties and thirties as a rich East Side, private-school kid, then a fabled charmer (he was a terrific dancer) and early devotée of the city's parties and pleasures.

There was an Astaire-like deftness and sense of style that went into the Botsford editings, which were applied swiftly with a fine-point mechanical pencil and left a galley of type looking leaner and ready to step out on its own. Often a writer—this writer, for one—couldn't quite remember what had disappeared from his text, or find where the scalpel had been slipped in. "Well, yes," Gardner would say, happy with the compliment. "A nice piece and let's enjoy it."

A long-term contributor, Mark Singer, recalls an early Talk piece of his that had grown miraculously stronger after a trip across Botsford's desk but had lost its significant, irreplaceable ending: "I went in ready to do battle, but he just gave me that smile and said, 'Too much is too much.' "

Tall and bald, with a straight back, Botsford wore his beautiful tweeds inconspicuously. Modesty and courtesy came naturally to him, but he was stuffed with surprises. He graduated from Yale but didn't return for reunions or honors; he mistrusted Old Elis and smiled happily whenever the Yale football team took a licking in a big game. Bores and self-important types were "sashweights" in his lexicon. A lifelong liberal and Democrat, he gave Ronald Reagan's name its original "Reegan" pronunciation if it had to be spoken. Women he liked were called "dearie" and trusted male friends "Old Cock." He beamed at the approach of an icy Martini or a lowdown joke—he was an appreciator above all—and his sacramental phrase "The Great Transformation" (for the after-dinner moment when the company shifted from wine to Scotch) fell into disuse only after the advent of Pellegrino and good sense. His laughter was world-class, a collapse into wheezings and gaspings and table poundings: nothing held back.

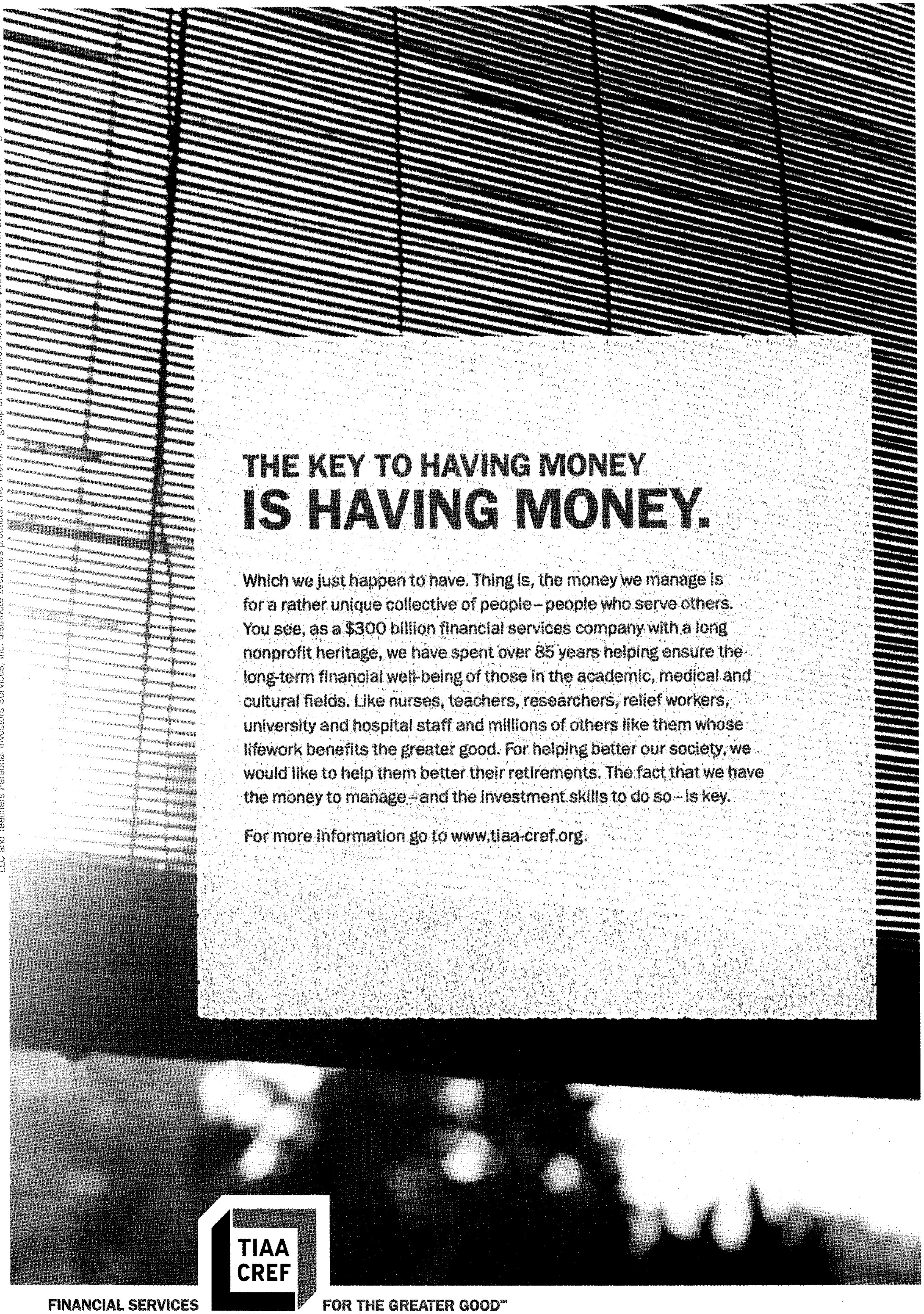


Gardner Botsford

All this was boyish and complimentary. "He crackled," in the phrase of Alastair Reid. Another old pal, Calvin Tomkins, described him as a Cavalier in an age of Roundheads, and a third, Charles McGrath, recalled a summer when he and his wife, young and short of cash, and with a new baby, were presented with the Botsford cabin, on a lake in Putnam County, for a couple of weeks at no charge. Maybe Gardner and Janet were renting my summer cottage in Maine just then—the time I returned to find a sheet of paper in my old Underwood upright, with the nicely spaced message "The Instrument of the Immortals. Write, Anatole, write—all France is waiting." Botsford or maybe Voltaire—there was no difference.

We thought we knew him, but then in January of last year, well into his eighties, he produced a trim, unweepy memoir, "A Life of Privilege, Mostly," which told us how much he had been keeping to himself. Who could have guessed that he was such a graceful and agile writer, for starters? He had been a rich kid, yes, but who knew about the five live-in servants there at 151 East Seventy-fourth Street, or the runaway trip around the world that he and another playboy college friend had managed, just before the war put an end to such jaunts? He was an infantry officer in Europe after that, but who else would have kept quiet about his intelligence mission (he spoke perfect French) to make contact with a key member of the Resistance a day or two after his own landing at Omaha Beach, or his capture of a valuable collaborator spy? None of this inconspicuous gallantry is dwelt upon, any more than his two serious wounds, his Bronze Star and Croix de Guerre and five campaign stars, or the moment he found himself face down in the snow at the time of the deadly Battle of the Bulge, with an enormous tank of unknown provenance pausing above him in the darkness. The fun of it gets more space—an AWOL sojourn in Paris in the wild first week of Liberation, and later the appreciations of peacetime and his early days as the Sunday-night man at the magazine, closing the late Cinema and Theatre columns and the Letters from London and Paris. He grows up in the book, without regret, and it finishes with a meticulous sad accounting of the late tenure of William Shawn, a Lear in his old age, wishing obsessively to hold the magazine in his hands forever. What I go back to in my own copy of Gardner's book is a little gallery of photographs in the middle pages, where so many old friends of mine and his—Shawn, Joe Liebling, Maeve Brennan, Janet Flanner, Mollie Panter-Downes, and the eloquently calm Janet Malcolm, each a different kind of genius—once seemed to regard me from the page but are now looking straight at their trusted and lighthearted old companion and keeper.

—*Roger Angell*



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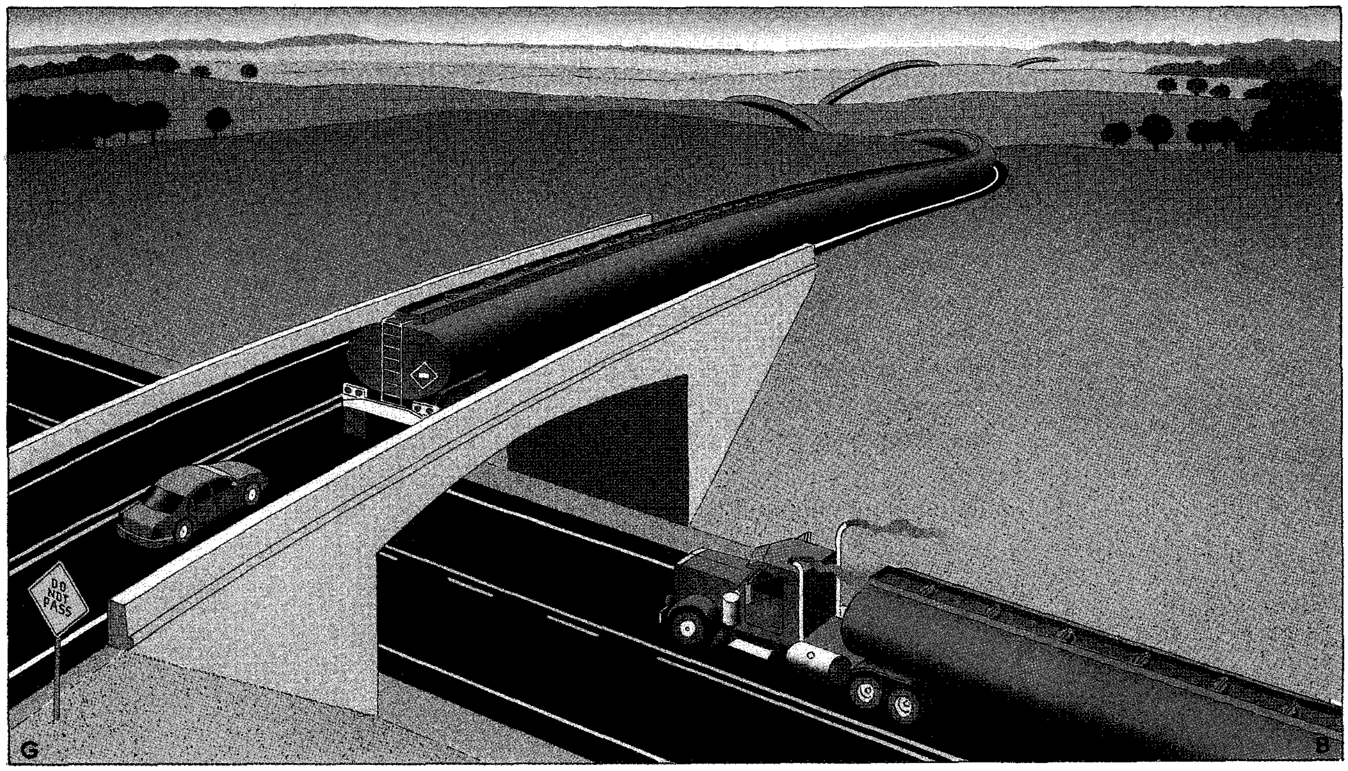
THE POLITICAL SCENE

PUMP DREAMS

Is energy independence an impossible goal?

BY JOHN CASSIDY

In the predawn hours of October 6, 1973, on Yom Kippur, Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a surprise attack on Israeli positions in the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Two weeks later, after the Pentagon had started airlifting matériel to Israel, to counter Soviet shipments to Egypt and Syria, King Faisal, of Saudi Arabia, cut off his country's oil exports to the United States. Other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, which had been founded in Baghdad thirteen years earlier, followed Faisal's lead. Almost overnight, the price of crude oil doubled. Gasoline prices rose sharply, shortages developed, and a new phrase entered the American lexicon: "gas lines." On November 7th, President Nixon, already under pressure from Watergate, addressed an anxious country, saying, "Let us set as our national goal, in the spirit of Apollo, with the determination of the Manhattan Project, that by the end of this decade we will have developed the potential to meet our own energy needs without depending on any foreign energy source."



If the United States were forced to rely on its own resources, it would run out of oil in four years and three months.

GUY BILLOUT

More than thirty years later, Nixon, Leonid Brezhnev, Anwar Sadat, Hafez al-Assad, and Golda Meir are all dead—and so is King Faisal, who was assassinated by his nephew in 1975—but energy independence has returned as a major issue. The price of crude recently touched fifty dollars a barrel, drivers in many parts of the country are paying more than two dollars a gallon for gasoline, and both Presidential candidates have been sounding uncannily like Nixon. "I want an America that relies on its own ingenuity and innovation—not on the Saudi royal family," Senator John Kerry said in his speech at the Democratic Convention, in July. "And our energy plan for a stronger America will invest in new technologies and alternative fuels and the cars of the future—so that no young American in uniform will ever be held hostage to our dependence on oil from the Middle East." President Bush has countered by pushing his own energy agenda, which includes a controversial proposal to begin drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, an idea that Congress has so far rejected. "We will make our country less dependent on foreign sources of energy," Bush told the Republican Convention.

Although the Democratic and Republican energy plans differ widely, their underlying rationale is the same. In 2003, the United States consumed some twenty million barrels of oil a day, of which slightly more than half was imported from abroad, much of it from the Persian Gulf. By 2020, according to the Department of Energy, domestic oil producers will be meeting less than a third of United States needs, and the Gulf countries will be supplying up to two-thirds of the world's oil. "This imbalance, if allowed to continue, will inevitably undermine our economy, our standard of living, and our national security," the Bush Administration's National Energy Policy Development Group warned in a May, 2001, report. "But it is not beyond our power to correct. America leads the world in scientific achievement, technical skill, and entrepreneurial drive. Within our country are abundant natural resources, unrivaled technology, and unlimited human creativity. With forward-looking leadership and sensible policies, we can meet our future energy demands and promote energy conservation, and do so in environmentally responsible ways that set a standard for the world."

When energy independence is presented in this way, it is hard to object—who would advocate energy dependence?—but optimism and an appeal to American patriotism don't add up to a coherent policy. Moving beyond rhetoric and actually trying to make America less reliant on foreign oil involves confronting powerful commercial interests, solving difficult technological problems, and convincing the American public that cheap fuel is not a birthright.

The two hundred and ninety million people who live in the United States make up just five per cent of the world's population, but they consume a quarter of the world's oil supply. For much of the twentieth century, the United States was the world's largest oil producer, and its profligacy wasn't a pressing problem. Today, however, we are only the third-largest producer, behind Saudi Arabia and Russia. In terms of proven reserves—oil deposits that are known to exist and are believed to be accessible at reasonable cost—we have slipped to tenth place in the international rankings, as reservoirs in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma have started to dry up.

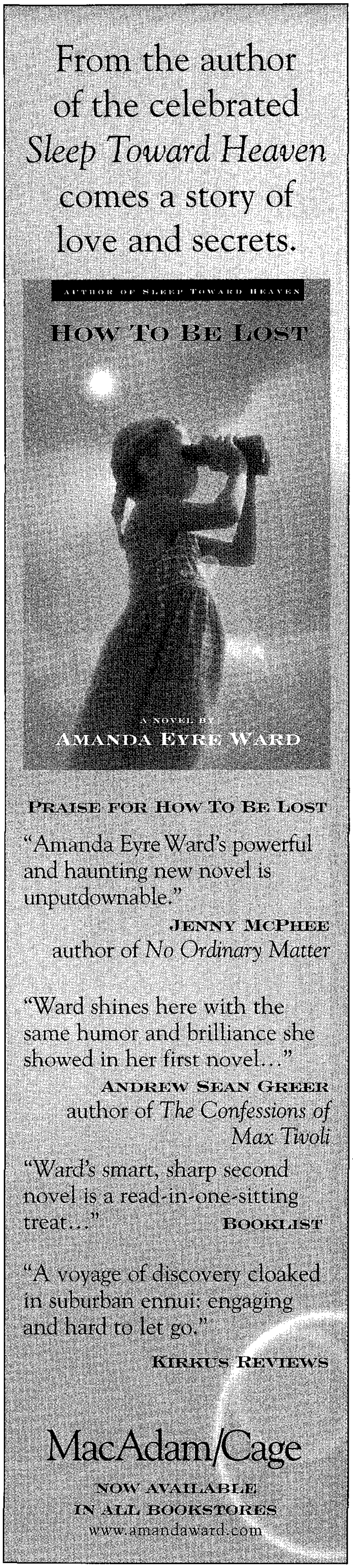
According to the oil company BP's "Statistical Review of World Energy," a recognized authority on these matters, at the end of 2003 the United States possessed thirty-one billion barrels of proven reserves, more than China and less than Nigeria. These figures have a straightforward implication: if the United States were forced to rely on its own resources, it would run out of oil in four years and three months. This calculation takes into account the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which President Ford created in 1975, and which is stored at a number of sites in Texas and Louisiana. At full capacity, the reserve contains about seven hundred million barrels of oil—enough to keep the economy going for a few months during an emergency, such as the outbreak of a war that would cut the supply lines to the Middle East, but not nearly enough to keep gasoline prices low for a more extended period, which is what some politicians have suggested. "The purpose of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, from its inception, was never to bring down the price of oil," Larry Goldstein, the president of the Petroleum Industry Research Foundation, told me. "It was to minimize the economic dislocation during supply disruptions, unforeseen shocks to the market."

The Bush Administration, which has proposed expanded tax breaks for drilling and exploration, apparently believes that there is plenty of oil yet to be discovered beneath the North American continent, a view not shared by the oil industry, which has cut back sharply on domestic drilling. Not so long ago, the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico were considered a fertile exploration area. Lately, after much costly and frustrating drilling, it has proved something of a disappointment. Lee Raymond, the chairman and chief executive of ExxonMobil, was recently moved to comment that the company would have done better financially if it had given up after sinking a single well there.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, on Alaska's North Slope, is the new hope. The Prudhoe Bay oil field, one of the world's biggest reservoirs, is just sixty miles west of the refuge. Surveys carried out by the U.S. Geological Survey suggest that ANWR may contain about ten billion barrels of recoverable oil. If this estimate turns out to be reliable, and if exploration starts next year, in 2025 ANWR could be generating about a million barrels of oil a day. This is a lot of fuel, but it dwindles next to our energy requirements. By 2025, according to the Department of Energy, Americans will be consuming almost thirty million barrels a day. With luck, an ANWR oil field operating at full capacity could satisfy perhaps three or four per cent of that total, meaning that most of the oil we use would still have to be imported.

Senator Kerry's ambitious energy plan, which doesn't include drilling in the Arctic preserve, comes in two parts. The less publicized piece involves promoting natural gas and coal, two hydrocarbons that already meet about half of America's energy needs, mostly in the form of fuel

From the author
of the celebrated
Sleep Toward Heaven
comes a story of
love and secrets.



PRAISE FOR HOW TO BE LOST

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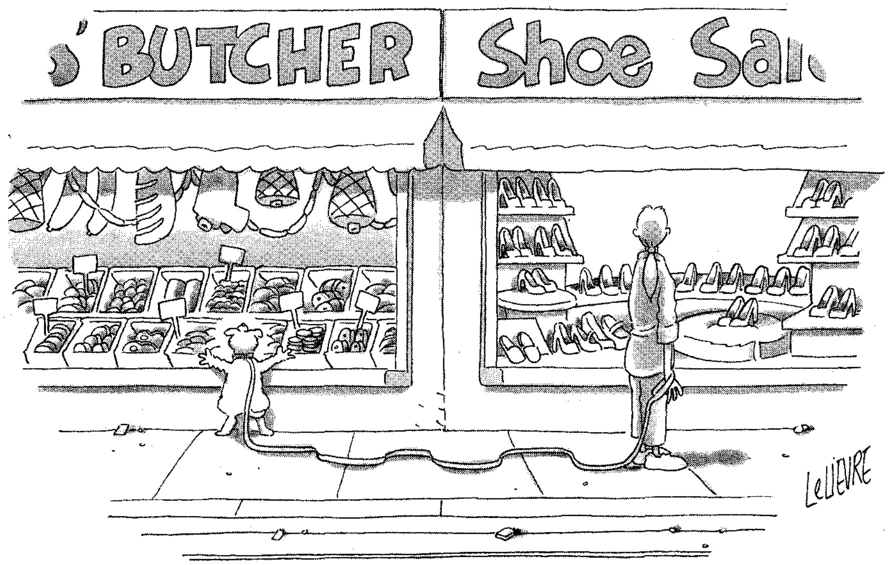


for power stations. Kerry says that he will build a gas pipeline from Alaska, where there are large deposits of natural gas, and invest ten billion dollars in modernizing antiquated coal plants.

These ideas have merit—global stocks of natural gas and coal are huge—but they don't represent a panacea. As natural gas has come to be used more widely in the United States, we have started to import large quantities of it from foreign producers. America possesses just three per cent of the world's known reserves; Iran, Russia, and Qatar together possess more than fifty per cent. There can be no guarantee that a future government in Tehran, Moscow, or Doha won't seek to exercise its market power in the same way that OPEC did in the nineteen-seventies.

Coal is less subject to political uncertainty, and Nazi Germany demonstrated that it can fairly easily be converted to gasoline. It is still abundant in the United States and in many other countries that are short of oil, such as China and India and some European countries. Modern coal-fired power plants don't emit nearly as much nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide, the two main sources of acid rain, as older plants do. However, burning coal inevitably generates carbon dioxide, the gas primarily responsible for global warming, which even the Bush Administration has now admitted is a genuine phenomenon. It is feasible to sequester the carbon dioxide, but scientists are divided about whether it will prove possible to store it someplace where it won't get released into the atmosphere. Since 1996, Statoil, a Norwegian company, has been injecting about a million metric tons of carbon dioxide a year into an aquifer under the North Sea. "People like myself have a lot of confidence that this will work," Bob Williams, a physicist at the Princeton Environmental Institute, told me. "But we can't say it with certainty until we do a lot more experiments. Nobody is going to be convinced by one demonstration project in the North Sea. You don't want CO_2 to come up into your basement from an underground storage area."

Many environmentalists see any attempt to prolong our dependence on hydrocarbons as dubious. The Apollo Alliance, an influential umbrella organization of Greens and trade unionists, is calling for the development of power derived from the sun, the oceans, and crops, which it says will enable the country to achieve energy independence within a generation. Senator Kerry has adopted some of the Apollo Alliance's rhetoric, calling energy independence "the great project of our generation." The second half of his plan, the conservation and alternative-energy part, includes a pledge to make sure that twenty per cent of America's electricity comes from renewable energy sources by 2020. Since about ten per cent of the power supply already comes from alternative-energy plants—hydroelectric plants, mainly—this doesn't sound like an overambitious target, and it hardly amounts to energy independence.

Yet, even getting to twenty per cent represents a big challenge. Power generated from waves, windmills, and solar panels is weak, intermittent, and expensive—at least twice the cost of electricity produced from coal or gas. When it is cold or dark, solar panels don't produce energy; when it is calm, wind turbines don't turn. To insure continuity of supply, renewable power plants have to budget for large amounts of overcapacity, a problem that isn't going to disappear. And, although alternative energy is getting cheaper as technology improves, the same is true of energy generated from hydrocarbons. "He"—Kerry—"is asking for an awful lot without telling us how he's going to get there and at what cost," Robert Ebel, a veteran oil-industry executive who once worked for the C.I.A. and now heads the energy program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington, said. "Where is the twenty per cent going to come from?"

There is another, more basic problem with Kerry's proposals. Switching to renewable energy wouldn't reduce oil imports much, because most power stations don't run on oil, which is largely used for road and air transport. Developing a transport fuel that can compete with oil is an enormous challenge. For this reason, among others, many analysts regard the candidates' endorsement of energy independence as a political diversion. "It makes absolutely no sense to talk about energy independence," Ebel told me. "We cannot produce our way to energy independence, and we cannot use efficiency or conservation to achieve energy independence. It's just not going to happen, at least in my lifetime."

If the skeptics are right, what can be done? Some experts, such as Edward L. Morse, who worked in the State Department on energy issues during the Carter and Reagan Administrations, believe that new discoveries in Russia, Central Asia, and West Africa will eventually allow the United States to diversify its sources of petroleum. "The most recent giant field that was discovered was Kashagan, in Kazakhstan," Morse told me. "That field probably has more oil in place than the total remaining known reserves of the United States. The exploitable resources in the former Soviet Union are probably on the same order of magnitude as those in Saudi Arabia and Iraq."

Unfortunately, nobody knows for sure how much crude is buried in the Caspian region and Siberia, or how much it will cost to extract those reserves and transport them to world markets. Taking the planet as a whole, the rate at which oil is being discovered has slowed down since the nineteen-sixties, and some geologists believe that global production is about to start falling. Colin Campbell, a British geologist who used to work for major oil companies, has popularized this argument. "Understanding depletion is simple," Campbell says on the Web site of the organization he founded, the Association for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas. "Think of an Irish pub. The glass starts full and ends empty. There are only so many more drinks to closing time. It's the same with oil."

The geological debate is difficult for an outsider to judge. All we know for sure is that proven reserves are concentrated in the Persian Gulf: Saudi Arabia (262.7 billion barrels), Iran (130.7 billion), Iraq (115 billion), the United Arab Emirates (97.8 billion), and Kuwait (96.5 billion). The only country in the Western Hemisphere that has reserves of comparable magnitude is Venezuela (78 billion barrels), which is also a member of OPEC and boasts a populist, left-leaning President, Hugo Chávez, who frequently rails against United States imperialism. OPEC oil, for all its geopolitical drawbacks, is cheap, easy to transport, and relatively clean if used efficiently.

One of the key strategic issues facing the United States is how to insure continued access to OPEC oil when other countries are also importing more fuel. During the past ten years, global demand for oil has risen by almost a fifth, with the greatest increases coming from India and China, which recently passed Japan to become the world's second-largest consumer of crude oil.

The decision to invade Iraq represented one way to deal with the oil-dependency dilemma: direct American intervention. President Bush, a former Texas wildcatter, and Vice-President Cheney, the former chief executive of Halliburton, the world's biggest oil-services company, both have an acute understanding of energy issues. In 1999, when Cheney was still at Halliburton, he gave a speech at London's Institute of Petroleum in which he pointed out that by 2010 the world would probably need another fifty million barrels of oil a day. "So where is the oil going to come from?" Cheney asked. "While many regions of the world offer great oil opportunities, the Middle East, with two-thirds of the world's oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies."

As Vice-President, Cheney was put in charge of the National Energy Policy Development Group, which, in its May, 2001, report, pointed out that the Persian Gulf region would "remain vital to U.S. interests." The Bush Administration hadn't publicly raised the possibility of invading Iraq, but in August, 2002, seven months before the war started, Cheney warned that Saddam would be able to seize control of the world's economic lifeline if he acquired weapons of mass destruction: "Armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror, and seated atop ten per cent of the world's oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East, take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies, directly threaten America's friends throughout the region, and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail."

Cheney has since been criticized for exaggerating the threat that Saddam represented, but the geostrategic thinking that underpinned the energy portions of his speech was not new. It dated back to January 23, 1980, when President Jimmy Carter declared, in his State of the Union address, "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

Prior to the Carter Doctrine, the United States had exercised its influence in the Middle East through friendly governments in Saudi Arabia and Iran: the so-called "twin pillars" of American policy. But in January, 1979, a popular revolt toppled the Shah, and the new regime in Tehran tilted toward Moscow. Then, in December, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Following Carter's speech, the Pentagon embarked on a lengthy military buildup in the Gulf, beginning with the creation of a Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, which could be dispatched to the Middle East on short notice. In 1983, President Reagan went a step further, establishing a U.S. Central Command, based in Tampa, and charging it with defending U.S. interests in East Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

When Communism collapsed, the U.S. military didn't withdraw from the Persian Gulf. After the Gulf War of 1991, it stationed its forces in Saudi Arabia, the Muslim holy land, and built up its presence in Qatar and Turkey. Saddam, after surviving one American-led invasion, eventually fell victim to Washington's willingness to project its power militarily, a point that Michael T. Klare, a professor at Hampshire College, in Amherst, Massachusetts, stresses in his new book, "Blood and Oil." "From the vantage of officers and enlisted personnel in the U.S. Central Command, the invasion of Iraq is only the latest in a series of military engagements in the Gulf proceeding from the Carter Doctrine," Klare writes. "This history helps to explain why the very first military objective of Operation Iraqi Freedom was to secure control over the oil fields and refineries of southern Iraq."

The policy of direct intervention hasn't worked as planned. In April, 2003, just weeks after the invasion of Iraq, Vice-President Cheney predicted that by the end of the year Iraq would be able to raise its oil output as much as fifty per cent over prewar levels. Before the war, the Iraqi National Oil Company was pumping about two and a half million barrels a day. Now, with the help of money, personnel, and equipment provided by the American government, it is pumping about 1.8 million barrels a day—at least, on those days when insurgent attacks on pipelines and storage facilities don't force a cut in production. Early hopes of a surge in foreign investment that would enable Iraq to double or triple production in the next few years have turned out to be fanciful. Western oil companies are understandably reluctant to invest in a country that seems to be slipping toward civil war. "Iraq has great potential, but it also has great problems," Robert Ebel said. "I would give them perhaps four, or four and a half, million barrels of production a day by the end of the decade—certainly not the six million barrels the Iraqis are talking about."

To energy traders, what is happening outside Iraq's borders is at least as important as what is happening inside the country. The Bush Administration's decision to take military action has destabilized the rest of the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, and this has severely rattled the oil market. "People who trade oil futures in New York and London read ten articles saying that the Saudi regime is going to collapse, then they bid up the price of oil," Robert Mabro, the chairman of the Oxford Institute of Energy Studies and an internationally renowned expert on oil, told me last week. "The fears may be exaggerated, but they are having a big effect on the oil price."

Contrary to popular belief, the OPEC cartel, led by Saudi Arabia, no longer controls the price of oil, and hasn't done so since 1986, when the price collapsed. The price is determined by the forces of supply and demand, operating through the futures markets in New York and London, where oil is traded like any other commodity. During the past couple of years, OPEC's eleven members have raised their daily production by almost three million barrels to meet rising demand, and they don't have much spare capacity left. Futures traders believe that another interruption in supply could lead to a crisis in the market. This has led them to bid up the current price by about fifteen dollars a barrel since the start of the year, an increase that is sometimes referred to in the markets as a security premium. "The recent terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia and the continuing attacks on oil infrastructure in Iraq are largely responsible for the extant security premium in crude-oil prices," John Kilduff, an energy analyst at the brokerage firm Fimat USA, said in recent testimony before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. "Historically, Saudi Arabia has been the stalwart in terms of being able to fill production gaps when they have occurred. The mere idea that the kingdom may be the source of a supply disruption has caused available crude to become even more valuable in the face of such an uncertainty."

By invading Iraq, the Bush Administration has unwittingly helped to create what its National Energy Policy was designed to avoid: rising oil prices that threaten to derail the economic recovery. When the price of fuel goes up, it acts like a tax on the economy, reducing consumers' purchasing power and raising firms' costs. After the oil-price shocks of both 1973 and 1979, the economy went into a recession. So far this year, the economy has continued to grow, but the rate of expansion has fallen, a development that Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, has largely blamed on rising oil prices.

In light of what is happening in the oil market and in the Middle East, many analysts believe it is time to reassess the Carter Doctrine and its Bush-Cheney variant. "I think we are pretty much at the end of the line," Jeffrey Sachs, the director of Columbia University's Earth Institute, who also serves as a special adviser to Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, told me. "Saudi Arabia is pretty rapidly destabilizing. Iraq I don't think we are ever going to get under control this way. And our relationship with Iran is poor and deteriorating. The idea that we are going to be the dominant military power of the Persian Gulf is an extremely unrealistic way to manage our affairs. I don't have an automatic solution. I just think that this one—where we keep building up the military commitment because it keeps failing—is a loser." A less provocative United States policy stance would involve reducing the American military presence in the Gulf while retaining a veto over what happens there. (American disengagement, which Senator Kerry sometimes seems to advocate, is neither realistic nor desirable.) "The only sensible policy in the Middle East for a superpower is one of benign protection," Robert Mabro said. "'Don't misbehave, boys! If you start misbehaving, we might intervene.' But we aren't going to be there all the time."

From an economic vantage point, a strategy based on Realpolitik makes sense. To meet the rising demand for oil in the coming decades, the Gulf states need to spend tens of billions of dollars on expanding their capacity, an enormous capital investment that is unlikely to materialize in a hostile environment. Some OPEC members already favor keeping the supply tight so that prices will stay high. As in the past, the West will have to rely on the Saudi government to be the voice of moderation. "If you are sitting on a very large reserve base, as Saudi Arabia is, you don't want somebody coming along and saying, 'We are really going to make a push to develop an alternative to the internal-combustion engine,' " Robert Ebel said. "You have a division of opinion within OPEC, but Saudi Arabia is big enough to call the shots."

For decades, energy policy has been subject to a simple political divide: Republicans tend to favor increasing supply; Democrats tend to favor reducing demand. If this split ever made sense, it doesn't any longer—something that Senator Kerry, to his credit, has grasped, despite his lack of candor about Middle East oil. "There is no single thing out there that is going to solve the problem," Larry Goldstein said. "You have to focus on the supply side as well as the demand side." Amy Myers Jaffe, a senior fellow at Rice University's James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, who heads a joint task force on the future of energy with the Council on Foreign Relations, concurs. "A coherent policy has to be a combination of everything," she said.

Considering Americans' voracious demand for fuel, the first step is conservation. The measures that Bush and Kerry have proposed, such as providing tax breaks to people who buy gas-electricity hybrids and cars powered by hydrogen fuel cells, are halfhearted. (American carmakers have just started to market these vehicles, in very limited numbers.) A quicker and less costly way to conserve fuel would be to tighten up the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency standards, which President Ford introduced. The fuel-efficiency requirements—27.5 miles per gallon for cars; 21 miles per gallon for light trucks—have hardly been raised since 1986. Moreover, many S.U.V.s are officially classed as light trucks, which means they are subject to less stringent requirements. If this loophole was closed, at least according to some estimates, demand for gasoline would drop by a million barrels a day—two-thirds of what we import from Saudi

Arabia. Yet neither candidate has been willing to face down the auto industry and come out in favor of making the change.

Getting serious about conservation would be a lot more practical than talking about the "hydrogen economy." In January, 2002, the Bush Administration launched its FreedomCAR Initiative, which was intended to produce an affordable hydrogen-powered automobile within ten or fifteen years. Not to be outdone, Senator Kerry has called for the establishment of a taxpayer-funded Hydrogen Institute, which, his campaign says, would "unite scientists and researchers to create a New Energy Economy by 2020." These grandiose plans are unlikely to be realized. In his new book, "The Hype About Hydrogen," Joseph Romm, a former Assistant Secretary of Energy in the Clinton Administration, points out that as far back as 1923 the British scientist John Haldane described an energy economy based on liquefied hydrogen stored in underground tanks. Since Haldane's day, a great deal of scientific effort has been expended on hydrogen fuel cells, but hydrogen-powered cars are still underpowered, unreliable, and costly. Hydrogen itself is also expensive, because it rarely exists in pure form. The cheapest way to obtain it is to burn coal or natural gas, which produces hydrogen and carbon dioxide.

For this reason, if no other, many experts say that increasing the supply of fossil fuels is essential. "It can't be our policy that we will never drill for energy in the United States, that we will never have any new import terminals for liquid natural gas, or that we don't mine coalfields," Jaffe said. Many people seem to be confused about where the power to light their homes comes from, she went on. "You have movements of canoeists that want to shut down every hydroelectric plant in the country. You have people who believe we shouldn't renew the leases for nuclear plants. Nobody wants a liquid-natural-gas terminal near their home. They don't want any drilling for natural gas or oil. The public is really not up to speed on energy issues."

Many Americans also appear to believe that they are entitled to cheap fuel, regardless of how much they consume. When gasoline hits two dollars a gallon, they look for somebody to blame—this despite the fact that gasoline is still cheaper than it was in the nineteen-seventies, after adjusting for inflation, and that it costs a lot less than it does abroad. In the United Kingdom, for example, a gallon of gasoline costs more than five dollars.

No prominent politician will say it publicly, but from an energy perspective an extended period of higher fuel prices might well be just what the country needs. Many of the problems we now face can be traced to the nineteen-nineties, when oil prices collapsed. Between 1976 and 1985, when gasoline prices were high, drivers switched to smaller, less wasteful cars, and oil consumption fell by ten per cent. Once oil prices slipped back, Americans returned to their beloved gas-guzzlers. Between 1985 and 2000, the demand for oil rose by almost twenty-five per cent.

Higher energy prices would have many beneficial effects. Besides encouraging gasoline conservation, they would help the renewable-energy sector, which can't compete at today's prices, and they also would make it economical to start exploiting nonconventional supplies of oil, such as oil shale in the Rockies, tar sands in Alberta, Canada, and heavy oil in Venezuela's Orinoco Belt. "Under any reasonable economic scenario, in twenty-five or thirty years we will be using more alternative fuels," Jeffrey Sachs said. "We will be gasifying coal and we will be liquefying tar sands, and doing a lot of things that mean OPEC's bargaining power will be reduced."

The most straightforward way to keep energy prices up, and the one that most developed countries adopt, is to tax hydrocarbons—a policy proposal long regarded as political suicide in the United States. The federal tax on gasoline hasn't gone up since 1993, when President Clinton raised it a paltry four cents a gallon. Americans prefer lower prices at the pump even if they have to pay hundreds of billions of dollars in taxes to support a U.S. military presence in the Middle East. Amy Myers Jaffe has calculated that the cost to taxpayers of oil-related military activities is equivalent to about ten cents per gallon of gasoline. "We are being taxed on energy in this country," she said. "It's just hidden."

Given the public's ignorance about energy issues, and the entrenched interests that dominate the industry, many analysts are skeptical about the prospects for change. Jaffe believes that it will take a repeat of what happened in the seventies to force meaningful reforms. Joseph Romm said, "If people cared about oil imports they would buy different cars. In response to 9/11, people started putting flags on their S.U.V.s and buying Hummers. That tells you something."

Before any progress can be made, the political debate will have to move beyond the myth of energy independence. "Sooner or later, we are going to have a lot of hybrid cars, electric cars, and, perhaps, at some time in the future, we are going to have a hydrogen economy," Robert Mabro told me. "But, until we get there, to talk about energy independence is foolish. The two candidates, with due respect, are lying to the people, or they don't know what they are talking about." ♦

"Wait. I never forget a face—Easter Island, 1722!"

LETTER FROM ATLANTA

PRAY AND GROW RICH

Dr. Creflo Dollar's ministry of money.

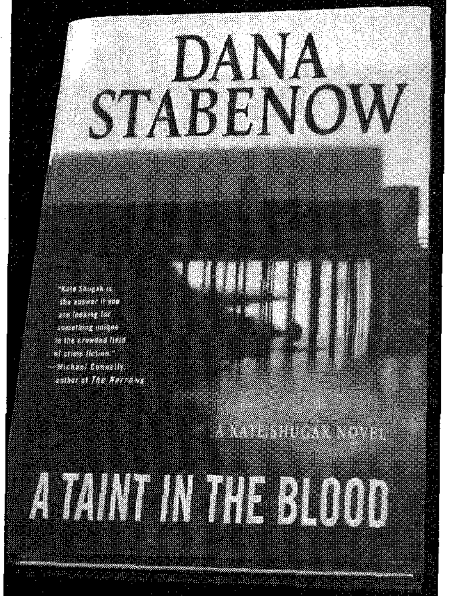
BY KELEFA SANNEH

If you had wandered into the World Changers Church International World Dome on a Sunday morning not long ago, you might have thought you'd stumbled into a shareholders' meeting, and in some ways you had. The dome, in southwest Atlanta, seats eighty-five hundred and was about two-thirds full—there are two Sunday-morning services, at eight and eleven, to accommodate the demand. A team of ushers directed latecomers to their seats. The minister of the church, Dr. Creflo A. Dollar, is a leading exponent of what's called "prosperity theology," which holds that faith and wealth are "inevitably intertwined." Dollar runs his church like a corporation, and before the service began a big, bespectacled, anxious-looking man in charge of "ministry systems" stepped up to the lectern to deliver an informal quarterly report, by way of a PowerPoint presentation. According to the latest figures, World Changers had some twenty-five thousand members, but only thirty per cent of them were regular tithers.

When the presentation was finished, Dollar appeared. He's a stocky, powerful-looking man of forty-two, with broad shoulders and a broader smile, accentuated by a wide mustache and slightly splayed teeth; he smiles easily and often, to convey satisfaction and dissatisfaction in roughly equal measure. Providing a Biblical gloss on the theme of giving, he asked the worshippers to open their Bibles to Malachi 3:8-11, at the end of the Old Testament. It was a passage that many of the congregants knew by heart: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." Tithing, Dollar explained, means giving the church ten per cent of your income, before taxes, which, he noted, was good news, in a sense, because it meant that when you got your tax refund you could keep the whole thing. He warned the congregation that there were no discounts available, and added that people who were thinking of giving less than ten per cent might as well save their money. "Go buy a Happy Meal," he said, chuckling. And then the buckets were passed. Dollar's ministry is firmly committed to making its followers richer, although, of course, they'll have to return the favor.

If his last name seems suspiciously well chosen, he was born with it, and he sometimes says that he wishes he hadn't been. "Then the Lord called me to the ministry, with a name like Dollar," he'll say, and shake his head, as if he can't believe his bad luck. On other occasions, he'll mention his name as proof of his destiny. "I don't reckon my last name is Dollar for no reason at all," he told me. One of his ministry's biggest selling points is his glamorous life style. His followers see the hand of Providence in his custom-tailored suits and alligator shoes, his Rolls-Royces, his private airplanes. Dollar has also become something of a hip-hop icon. He appears in the music video "Welcome to Atlanta," by Jermaine Dupri and Ludacris, and 50 Cent recently rhymed "Creflo Dollar" with "pop my collar." When the rapper Ma$e decided to devote himself to God, Dollar became his spiritual father.

World Changers Church has nearly three hundred and forty employees and an annual budget of about eighty million dollars. In addition to the two Sunday-morning services, the church offers services on Wednesday and Friday nights, which are led by Dollar or by one of about a dozen other ministers in the church. The dome draws worshippers, largely African-American and largely middle-class, from all over the Southeast, and Dollar's broadcasts are available to just about any English-speaking person who owns a television or a radio. (He is particularly pop-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Creflo Dollar tells congregants who aspire to prosperity to “speak debt-cancelling Scriptures” every day. Photograph by Gilles Peress.

MAGNUM

ular in Australia and South Africa; later this month, he will be leading a four-day conference in a vast arena in Johannesburg.) On October 30th, he will launch World Changers New York; he plans to commute from Atlanta each week to lead Saturday-night services at the Theatre at Madison Square Garden.

Dollar is a slick TV preacher who sometimes impersonates a down-home Holy Roller, a Bible-thumping evangelist who moonlights as a motivational speaker, a hard-nosed entrepreneur who sometimes talks like a black activist—and he might be the only person on the planet who can count both Evander Holyfield and Oral Roberts as friends. Dollar’s commitment to the combined power of faith and finance puts him firmly in the American mainstream, alongside P. Diddy, President Bush, and a lot of other people in between. But while Dollar’s loyal followers love his outsized personality, unsuspecting viewers who chance upon his paid programs on BET are just as likely to be appalled. For many people, there’s something about a preacher in a Rolls-Royce that just doesn’t seem right.

The World Changers headquarters occupy a vast, L-shaped array of buildings that used to be a strip mall, next to the World Dome; the hallways are long and spotless, lined with indistinguishable locked doors, and everyone wears a nametag. Dollar’s office is marked by two huge polished wooden pillars, and a sign that says “Executive Suite”; it’s an ersatz living room that feels more like a television studio. (He occasionally tapes segments there; the main studio is down the hall.) As at the pulpit, he is in person both casual and careful, amiable without ever seeming chatty; he doesn’t move around much or raise his voice, perhaps because he has grown accustomed to undivided attention. By now, Dollar’s life story has been compressed into a series of parables. His mother, Emma Dollar, worked for a time in the cafeteria of an elementary school in College Park, Georgia, a predominantly black suburb of Atlanta, and his father, Creflo A. Dollar, Sr., was a police officer there. (His career ended in controversy when he was accused of shooting a fellow-officer.) The Dollars went to the nearby Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, but the young Creflo was more interested in the choir than in the service, and more interested in football than in anything else.

As a budding football star, he attended Concord College, in West Virginia, and then transferred to West Georgia College, hoping to advance his athletic career. It wasn’t until he suffered a serious injury—“some type of hernia,” he recalls—that he decided to make a deal with God: “I said, ‘O.K., you just let me make it through this one year,’ and he said, ‘Fine.’ ” He stayed healthy, but not quite healthy enough to play, and he recalls telling a friend, “I will finally do what God’s called me to do.”

Dollar started a small Bible-study group while he pursued a degree, first in psychology and then in history. He was ordained in 1983, at the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, and he graduated in 1984. He also had a new girlfriend:

Taffi Bolton, a fellow-student at West Georgia College, who had been born again in one of his Bible-study meetings. In 1986, the two were married, and Creflo was supplied with a versatile new preaching point: in his sermons, Taffi Dollar comes across as a wise, patient, witty woman, always ready to puncture the preacher's grandest conceit with a well-timed remark. The Dollars have two sons by adoption—Greg, a white son whom Creflo met while working at a psychiatric institution, and Jeremy, who is the latest addition to the family—as well as three daughters of their own. All of them appear in church every Sunday.

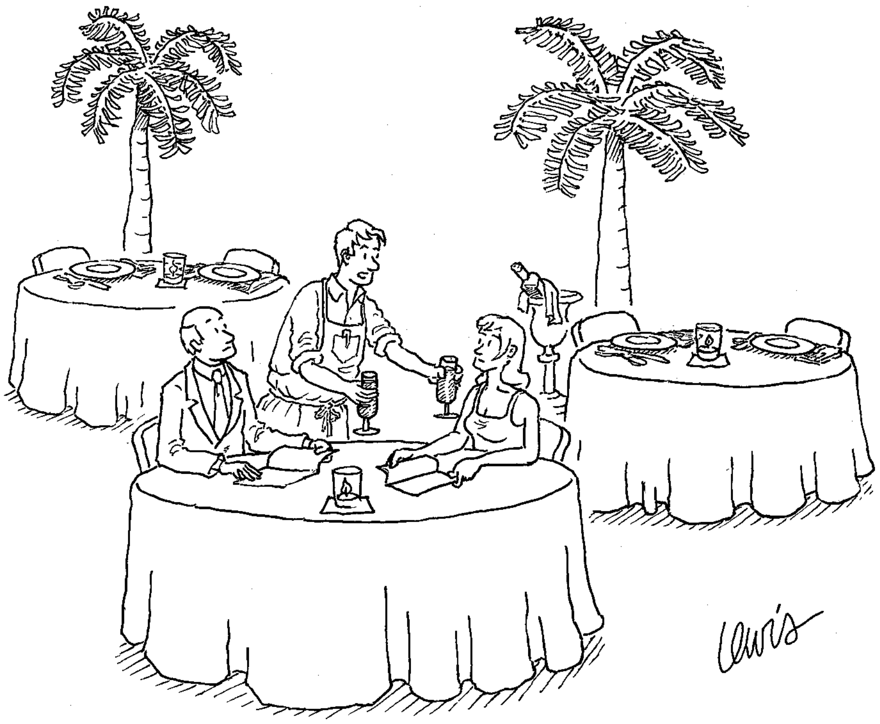
World Changers Church started, in 1986, with a congregation of eight praying in a makeshift sanctuary, renting space in Dollar's old elementary school; he recalls that "it took exactly two minutes to take the offering up—and most of that was change." Despite his Baptist ordination, he claimed no denomination as his own; the fact that he sometimes seemed to be inventing his own theology as he went along was part of what people liked about him. He was convinced that the Word—the Bible—was essentially an instruction manual, and his only job was to help his people follow directions. Taffi Dollar became the church's second-most-visible pastor (she recently led a weeklong conference for and about "Virtuous Women"), although she has never seemed entirely comfortable in the pulpit.

By 1989, the church had five hundred members, and Dollar moved his congregation into a former Baptist church down the road. Word of mouth had turned his small study group into a thriving church, but if he wanted to keep growing he would need a broader form of advertisement. So he used a video camera to tape one of his services, and paid a local community-access station thirty dollars to broadcast it. This was, in a sense, his second conversion, and he describes it with the shivery enthusiasm of a true believer. "It was the most exciting thing we ever experienced in our lifetime," he says. "Terrible tape, but I remember the first broadcast that came on. I said, 'It has begun.' "

After the collection, Dollar preaches for about an hour, and then he regroups and does it again, tweaking the sermon slightly, depending on which lines get the most response. Even when he is in full voice, Dollar always maintains some measure of reserve. There is never a moment of abandon, either in the pulpit or in the pews; you cannot dance in the aisles or hug the preacher while Dollar is performing, and the frenetic beat of black gospel music is largely absent, replaced by the willowy rhythms of light jazz. One morning recently, Dollar gave a sermon about the "three enemies of holiness": immorality, financial corruption, and rebellion. It begins with a deft riff on sexual morality, during which Dollar keeps switching rhetorical modes, to make sure no one gets too comfortable or uncomfortable. He quotes I Corinthians 10:8: "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." Then he states the principle plainly and sternly: "It is not all right for Christians to have sex without being married." Next, a lofty appeal to African-American history: "The curse of slavery has come back up, where you got a stud slave and you sent him from tent to tent, and told him all you have to do is make babies!" And he throws in a bit of slang, to assure his listeners that he's not so different from them: "Yep—you gotta call and cancel the date, bruh!"

As he announces each verse, it appears on giant screens above him, thanks to two women who sit in a media-control room behind the stage: one of them drags her finger across the pages of a well-thumbed Bible to track Dollar's position while the other one types chapter and verse into a computer, anticipating the rhythm of Dollar's speech so that she can hit "Enter" at precisely the right moment. Producers coördinate the movements of the four to six cameras that record every service. In the rooms next door, there are stacks of cassette decks and VCRs, making unedited recordings that will go on sale in the church bookshop as soon as the service is over. Editors compile the best material from both services into two thirty-minute episodes, which are broadcast all over the world about six months later. (The ministry buys some thirty million dollars' worth of television time every year; it has also started to make Dollar's programs available online.) During the "cancel the date" riff, a cameraman has been warned that Dollar is about to turn toward the camera, and a moment later he does so, speaking to an imaginary viewer, six months in the future: "Get outta that bed right now! Put your clothes on!" He announces that he has found the cure for sexual addiction. "Tell your wife," he says, flashing a wicked grin. "She like Jesus—she'll fix it every time." People laugh and cheer. Then Dollar becomes gentle and solicitous: "Y'all all right? You know I love you, don't ya?"

Satisfied that the congregation is still



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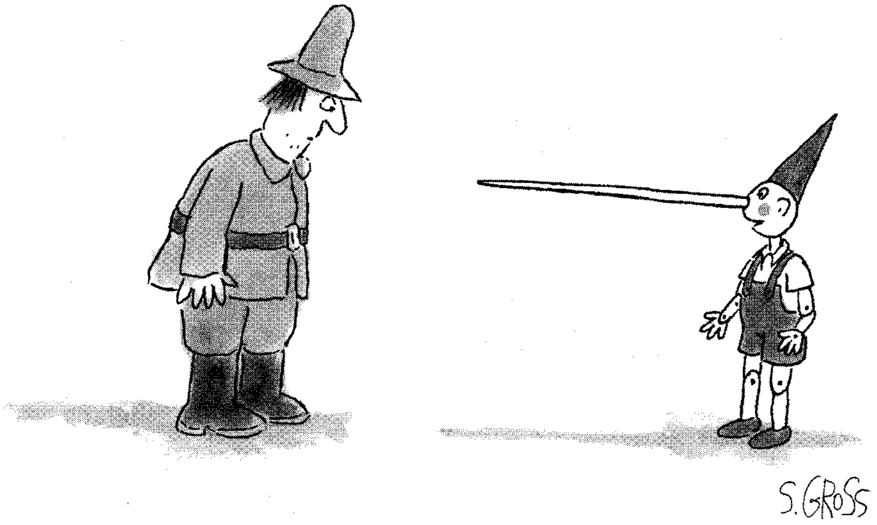

"Sometimes it works in my favor. I got off jury duty."

• •

with him, he starts in on the second enemy of holiness: financial corruption, one of his favorite topics. He tells the tale of Gehazi (II Kings 5:20), the servant whose greed earns him leprosy, and he says that some church members, too, have got their priorities mixed up. The point isn't that jobs or money is bad—on the contrary, the point is that going to church and praising God will help you get more money and a better job. Dollar, as is his custom, offers himself as an example. "I own two Rolls-Royces and didn't pay a dime for them," he says, getting ready for one of his favorite lines. "Why? Because while I'm pursuing the Lord those cars are pursuing me." The congregants nod, as if they could picture those two British sedans, grim determination etched across their grilles, racing after their pastor. Next comes a brief pitch for salvation—"Will you choose to get filled or get grilled?"—and, by the time a small group of members-to-be have approached the stage, Dollar has gone. He seems eager to avoid the process of meeting and greeting: it's inefficient, chaotic, and maybe even unhygienic.

Maintaining proper order has required certain precautions, and Dollar employs an Executive Protection Detail to keep people at a safe distance. Until recently, the team was led by Steven Street, a small, intense military veteran who says that he chose World Changers over a career in the Secret Service. (When someone asked him if he'd seen the movie "Black Hawk Down," he responded, with great satisfaction, "I was there, sir.") Street has now left to do security work in Iraq; his successor is Bobby Bryant, a longtime member of the Executive Protection Detail.

The members of Dollar's congregation don't seem to mind the house rules. One of the people who approached the stage that day was a woman named Kathy, who had recently moved to Atlanta from Chicago. She said that she had been watching Dollar on television for about a decade, and that now, on her third visit to the World Dome, she was ready to become a member. "There's no need for me to know him on a personal basis," she said, sounding like a college student enrolled in the most popular course on campus. Kathy had her photograph taken in a small room above the pulpit, and she filled out a form with personal information, including her Social Security number. There would be an orientation session the following week, and soon afterward Kathy would begin New Members class. Dollar urges that worshippers become "spiritually employed," in addition to attending at least two services a week, but Kathy wouldn't be eligible to become a church volunteer until after she had completed the classes.

A few years ago, the management scholar Peter F. Drucker wrote an article in which he argued that the "explosive growth" of mega-churches is "a striking social phenomenon." Over the past two decades, many of the country's fastest-growing churches have also been the biggest, creating congregations the size of tent revivals. Preaching to a crowd isn't a new idea, of course, but many of these churches have found innovative ways to keep thousands of members happy at once; the congregation is often broken up into smaller ministries, which can target different groups—single mothers, or high-school students, or even sports fans. At a time when liberal Protestant churches had gone into decline, Drucker wrote, mega-churches were doing better by doing less, eschewing social causes in order to focus single-mindedly on "the spiritual development of the parishioners," the same way successful corporations focussed on maximizing shareholder value. If you are hoping to read about all the good things that World Changers does with its money, you have missed the point. The church does make modest donations to the Atlanta Union Mission, among other organizations. But, like other mega-churches, World Changers can't afford to forget that its most important charity is itself. The church is called World Changers, but its motto is "Changing Your World," not "Changing *the* World."

Every Tuesday morning at the World Changers campus, Dollar gathers his senior managers for a cabinet meeting. At World Changers, there are no problems, only "challenges," and the cheerful, energetic inhabitants have turned professionalism—neat desks, sharp clothes, ruthless punctuality—into a ruling ideology. Dollar is an "excellence nut," one of his deputies told me, which perhaps explains the radiation-lab cleanliness. The cabinet meeting I observed began with a discussion about "activating inactive partners and members," through a program called the Lost Sheep Ministry. Like most of the church's initiatives, it was a sophisticated exercise in consumer marketing. The ministry was to target three thousand dropouts, each of whom would receive a letter with an invitation to rejoin the flock, followed by a phone call, and then, if necessary, a visit from a ministry delegate. "I've met a tremendous number of people who just fell back on their old life style," Dollar said, and he had to wonder whether the church might have done more to help them, and to keep their business. Later, the cabinet discussed funerals, known as "homegoings." The church hosts its members' homegoings, but there's no written policy on whether the church will also provide food—and, Dollar said, "You know how black folks and free food is."

Like any corporation of its size, World Changers has plans and growth targets. The church now sits on eighty-one acres of land, and Dollar estimates that the monthly operating budget is between three and six million dollars, much of which comes from members, who attend services at the World Dome, and partners, who follow the ministry through radio or television. When I first visited the campus, Jerlyn Goodwin, the director of information processing, led me into a big room full of employees and envelopes and money-counting machines. The process seems to strike her as little short of miraculous: the influx of donations never stops, and her job is to try to keep track. Since Dollar's sermons aren't broadcast until six months later, donations from viewers and listeners are easier to predict—whenever there's a particularly large Sunday offering, Goodwin knows to expect a spike in partner donations half a year later.

Dollar says he doesn't see much difference between being a pastor and being a C.E.O., which means that even the most unworldly activities become the subject of endless memos and e-mails. Because he is a strong believer in intercessory prayer, the church has set up a prayer ministry, consisting of some four hundred members working in shifts, usually praying "in the spirit"—in tongues—so that they don't have to know exactly what they're praying for. Vic Bolton, Taffi's brother, is a bluff, garrulous fellow who serves as the director of ministry affairs; he explained that the prayer ministry is set up to insure that "there's always somebody praying—several somebodies, typically—at all hours of the day." Other parts of World Changers look more like a secular business: the campus puts out a barrage of books, pamphlets, and magazines, along with the countless daily and weekly television and radio programs, edited for different regions. In order to energize—and, naturally, "activate"—partners around the world, the church also organizes a series of conventions and meetings throughout the year.

There's little room for skepticism at

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World Changers, perhaps because there's no room for nonbelievers: the corporation hires only born-again Christians (and practicing tithers). After one spends a few days on the World Changers campus, it all starts to get mixed up: the shareholders are the customers are the employees, and the corporate commitment to excellence comes to seem indistinguishable from the religious commitment to righteousness. It is a vision in which everyone will go on becoming more righteous and more excellent and more prosperous, forever and ever.

Preachers seldom footnote their sermons: they encourage their audiences to believe that the words come straight from God, or their hearts, rather than from other preachers. Dollar, not surprisingly, says that he preaches about prosperity because the Bible tells him to do so. And though his forthright approach to giving and getting may seem like a peculiarly modern heresy, it's the message that the apostle Paul delivered in II Corinthians:

> But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

American preachers have long had to rely exclusively on cheerful givers: by outlawing state-sponsored religion, the Constitution enshrined freedom of religion and freedom of markets side by side, which meant that successful preachers often had to be entrepreneurs, too. The money had to come from somewhere, and church leaders found a wide variety of solutions, including the custom, popular in the nineteenth century, of charging worshippers an annual "pew rental" fee. Not coincidentally, church leaders have also found creative ways to denounce greed without denouncing money. The freewheeling spirit of revivals (including the so-called Businessman's Revival of 1858) helped replace the old Puritan work ethic with something a bit more ambitious—a business ethic, if you like—and by the first decades of the twentieth century the revival circuit had spawned prosperity preachers such as Aimee Semple McPherson and Billy Sunday, both of whom pointed to their wealth as proof of their righteousness.

If the rich were happy to hear that they, too, could be righteous, the righteous were even happier to hear that they, too, could be rich. African-American preachers often combined these two goals with a third, racial uplift. Father Divine, whose Long Island estate was a site of pilgrimage during the twenties and thirties, is perhaps the most famous of these, and Frederick Eikerenkoetter, known as Reverend Ike, the "Thinkonomics" pioneer who hawked Christian trinkets on television in the nineteen-seventies, is perhaps the most infamous. ("The best thing you can do for the poor," he used to say, "is not be one of them.") But the same general ideas have been part of the major African-American denominations since Abolition, and before: the history of the black church in America is also a history of mutual-aid societies, insurance companies, employment agencies, and banks.

"I have to take it back to the shop and throw it away."

When World Changers was founded, Dollar wasn't talking much about money, in part because of the notoriety of Reverend Ike—"Nobody wanted to preach on prosperity after that," he says. But five years later, in 1991, he says, God called on him to show his congregation how to get out of debt. There was a minor controversy—"I lost thirty members that day," he says—and he began hearing rumors about himself. Money-minded preachers have always made easy targets for skeptics. In "The Varieties of Religious Experience," William James derided the influential nineteenth-century missionary George Müller, marvelling at the "extraordinary narrowness of the man's intellectual horizon," and noting contemptuously that "his God was, as he often said, his business partner." Dollar, though, is proud to claim God as his business partner, and James's outrage no longer seems so self-evident: who *wouldn't* want God as a business partner? The charge of "narrowness" has also lost most of its sting. Dollar prides himself on his practicality, and he deflects questions about the theological tradition he calls his own. In his book "Total Life Prosperity: 14 Practical Steps to Receiving God's Full Blessing," he writes that he graduated from a place more prestigious than any seminary: "I call it the College of Kneeology, and God is the dean. I stay on my knees until I hear from God."

Appropriately for the leader of a self-styled Word church, Dollar is fascinated by the power of language. He advises those who aspire to prosperity to "speak debt-cancelling Scriptures" every day, in order to help make God's promise real, and there's no denying that it has been successful in Dollar's life. The more he talks about money, the more he gets; the more he gets, the more he talks about it. "I can't preach prosperity to somebody if I can't demonstrate that the principles work in my own life," he says, and, like many of his statements, it's transparently self-serving but also internally consistent.

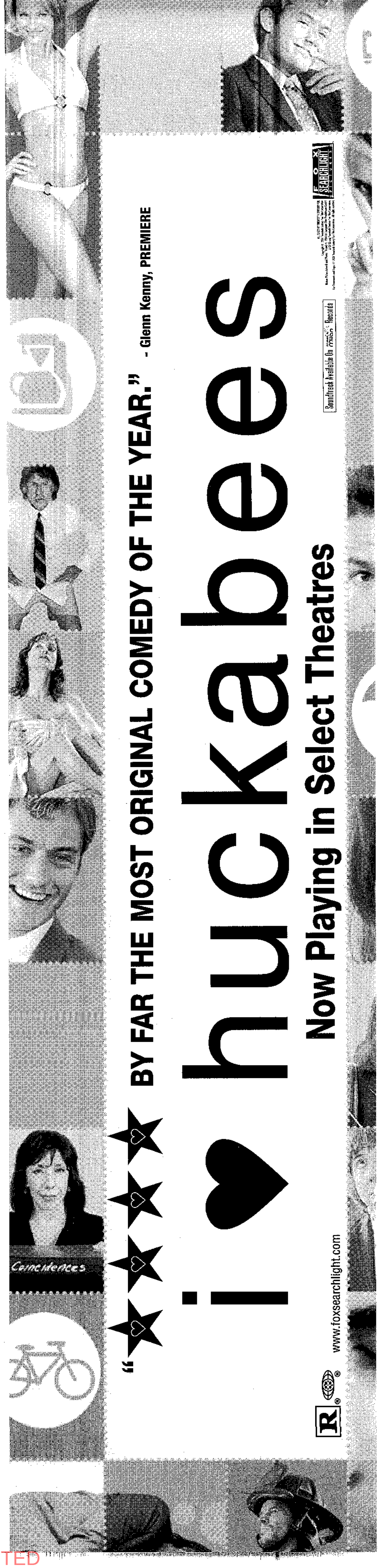
Dollar's wealth is hard to measure, and he's vague about the details. His salary is set by a special compensation board, and he says that his speaking fees go directly to the church. The Dollars own a house in Cascade, south of Atlanta, but they also have the use of a church-owned house (Taffi Dollar calls it an "estate") in Fayetteville. Dollar's two private planes are technically church property, too. Dollar says he also gets income from book royalties, private enterprise (including real-estate holdings and an investment company), and, above all, gifts. The Rolls-Royces were gifts, he says: one from his congregation, on Pastor Appreciation Day (a holiday that he instituted, as he freely admits), and one from his "spiritual sons and daughters" in the ministry. And, as he tells it, huge checks are always finding their way to him, unbidden. "I walk in so much favor, it's amazing," he said to me. "I mean, I've had people come up to me and give me a check for a hundred thousand dollars, and I'm thinking, What the heck is this?"

And yet Dollar hardly gives the impression of a man who really enjoys his wealth. Despite an avowed distaste for symbolism, he seems to realize that his wealth is, first and foremost, a symbol, and a tool—it offers him proof that he's doing the right thing, and the means to keep doing it. He's a restless capitalist but not much of a hedonist; this isn't someone who goes home at night to gaze lovingly at his extensive collection of alligator shoes. Vic Bolton, explaining the church's commitment to "spotlessness," told me, "He believes that maintaining things means keeping them new"—which is to say, Dollar likes things that look as if they'd never been used. He talks about his Rolls-Royces so often, and in so many different ways, that you begin to realize that talking about them is the whole point—they are two expensive rhetorical gambits, parked in his driveway. "I don't think I hardly even drive those cars," he says, and it sounds like the truth.

Dollar claims to be a man who doesn't struggle with self-doubt, because he relies on God. "At the risk of me sounding real spiritual," he said, "the vision is what takes a person through the trials." At the same time, he'll draw you in by bemoaning his fate, half jokingly. He's happy to list his tormentors' favorite insults, ticking them off as if they were accomplishments: "You get the things like 'Crook,' 'Pass-a Dollar,' 'Cash-flow Dollar.' " And he says (dropping his voice to imply sincerity) that he was ready to give up on preaching prosperity altogether until his friend Oral Roberts told him to stay the course. But one reason Dollar has largely avoided the sort of controversies that have dogged television evangelists is that he flaunts what most preachers would hide. It would be one thing if a disillusioned former member stumbled upon a cache of luxury cars and private jets, but what can you say to a man who makes lavish living part of his message? As he puts it, "You can't be a spiritual sissy and preach this message, because you're gonna get hit."

Dollar is versatile enough to tell every audience what it wants to hear, and though he's unswerving in his denunciation of homosexuality, say, he is also careful to avoid the kind of inflammatory language that potential followers might find offensive. At the World Dome, his comments on politics tend to be circumspect, as befits a man who seems equally at home with black activists and white fundamentalists. When I asked him if he had preached about President Bush and the war in Iraq, he emphasized his pro-troops position: "We spoke real strong on our responsibility as Christians—to pray, to support those men and women." But when I sat in on a sermon at an African-American church in North Philadelphia I heard a different message. Dollar, getting worked up during a riff on God's blessing of prosperity, said, "A war can't stop the blessing. A bad economy can't stop the blessing. A stupid President in office can't stop the blessing."

Dollar's reputation took a blow in 1999, during the rancorous divorce of his church's most famous member, the boxer Evander Holyfield. Like all World Changers members in good standing, Holyfield had been making regular donations to the church, but his wife claimed that some of his giving was less than altruistic—she claimed that he had given millions to the church,



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and perhaps to Dollar personally, in the months before he filed for divorce, and she demanded that World Changers make available its financial records. Dollar declined, citing confidentiality (and, for good measure, the sanctity of marriage), and, when the judge threatened to throw him in jail, he sometimes had to leave the state to escape the court's jurisdiction. Before the case was eventually settled out of court, it brought months of negative publicity in the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* and on local television stations. "I felt like I'd been raped," Dollar says now, though he also admits that bad publicity has its uses—church attendance "went through the roof."

Other World Changers controversies seem almost quaint. When, in 2000, Dollar presented a hundred local police officers with thousand-dollar checks, as a show of appreciation for their work in the district, some speculated that his main purpose was to buy his way out of speeding tickets. (As Dollar points out, this would be a spectacularly poor investment if it were true.) More recently, the church fought the city and its neighbors over the construction of a new parking lot to replace the muddy field where churchgoers used to park. What began as a local church is the size of a sports arena, and now, having built the parking lot, Dollar is looking forward to another goal: he says that God has asked him to build a sixty-thousand-seat World Changers stadium, once the church has grown big enough, and when the time comes he'll do what he did before. He'll tell his followers what God told him, dig a hole, and wait for the money to pour in.

It's clear that Dollar's image helps keep his pews filled, and the local worshippers love the idea that one of them—an African-American, a Southerner, a Christian—is doing so well. But this isn't what accounts for his worldwide following. An earlier generation of Evangelicals found their own style—Jimmy Swaggart was the lachrymose drama queen, Pat Robertson was the down-home scholar of world events, Reverend Ike was the shameless hustler. Dollar likes to remind his listeners that each sermon is a performance, and he intersperses earthy sayings with plainspoken conversation. He's believable because he always seems slightly disengaged, like the wily shopkeeper who tells you, with a casual wave of the hand, that you're free to take your business elsewhere if you wish. This is why the World Changers empire is both so stable and so precarious. All the money, all the decisions, all the planning—everything comes from one Creflo A. Dollar, a man who has been blessed with both hard-charging ambition and a marvellously soft touch.

On a rainy Atlanta evening not long ago, a black Cadillac Escalade pulled up beside a Gulfstream G3 jet, where a small red carpet was waiting. After ten hours at the office, Dollar was flying to Miami, to speak at a conference organized by the Right Connection Evangelical Association, a networking group of like-minded ministers and their associates. On the plane, he was relaxed, chuckling about a gospel singer who had tried to extract a last-minute honorarium from the church, and doing an imitation of a drunken deacon he'd seen in Detroit, slurring, "Leddussspray." After a brief flight, he was met at Opa-Locka airport by a deacon from the conference's host organization, Jesus People Ministries Church. An impressive motorcade had been assembled: there was a cream-colored Bentley for Dollar and his head of security, and a stretch limousine for his aides; police cars followed ahead and behind.

By the time the party arrived, the church was crammed with people who had found out about Dollar's appearance, and the service had started. It had the cheerful, seedy energy of a flea market: there was a videotape playing, offering "a variety of products for your spiritual enlightenment and edification," including, oddly enough, diet pills. There was a wild performance by dancers in bright satin outfits, and then the pastor—who calls himself Bishop Isaiah S. Williams, Jr., D.D.—took the stage, smiling that too-big preacher's smile which Dollar always takes care to avoid, and asking for money. "Aren't you glad that our God is a giving God?" he said. "You can give your way out of bad situations, give your way out of poverty." In case anyone missed the point, envelopes had been imprinted with a church slogan: "The seed I sow is towards debts I won't owe." Dollar walked onto the church stage just in time for his introduction, in which Williams bragged about having visited Dollar's "mansion." And then, in front of a wall painted with blue and pink palm trees and sailboats, Dollar started to preach.

When you think about all the money that flows into World Changers, it's easy to conclude that Dollar's followers are being ripped off. But when you see him at his best you might conclude that the real rip-off artists are those other preachers: the barely competent seminary graduates who mumble for half an hour every week, the vapid Holy Rollers who shout and clap because that's what people expect, the folksy nineteen-sixties throwbacks who reduce Biblical complexities to peace-and-love bromides. Dollar, by contrast, is a brilliant performer. In Miami, he elicited not only murmurs of approval and loud amens but also waves of laughter, quiet grunts of edification, occasional gasps of bewilderment, and, at the end, blasts from a worshipper's ram's horn.

What made the response all the more remarkable was that Dollar was conducting a "silent session"—that is, a sermon in which he criticizes his listeners, hoping to inspire self-reflection instead of celebration. Since this was a leadership conference, Dollar spent an hour explaining how difficult true leadership is. He manipulated the rhythms of his sentences to suggest the rush of idealism running up against the problems of the world, building momentum and then stopping short. "I want to sow this so deep into your spirit that it bothers you and it wakes you up tonight and it weighs on you tomorrow—that there is a cost," he said. He told a story of how his mother used to cover a beat-up coffee table with a pretty piece of fabric, and then made a punning analogy: the problem with the church today, he said, was too many "fabricated leaders." The rhythm got faster again, a crescendo of outrage: "What is your big church worth when you're mean and hateful? What is your big church worth when you've got no self-control? What is your big church worth when you're sleeping with everyone that comes to your little church?"

After all the advice, Biblical parables, and boasts about his marriage, Dollar finished on a note of encouragement. He asked the congregation to recite a pledge to "choose the character of Jesus," and then he prophesied that their churches would flourish, and told everyone to have an explanation ready for when people asked how they did it. "Say, 'The Devil don't know which one of us is beating him up. He don't know if it's us or if it's Jesus—'cause we look so much alike!' " And, almost before the applause had subsided, Dollar walked offstage and through the greenroom and out the back door to the cream-colored Bentley that was waiting to take him back to his jet. ◆

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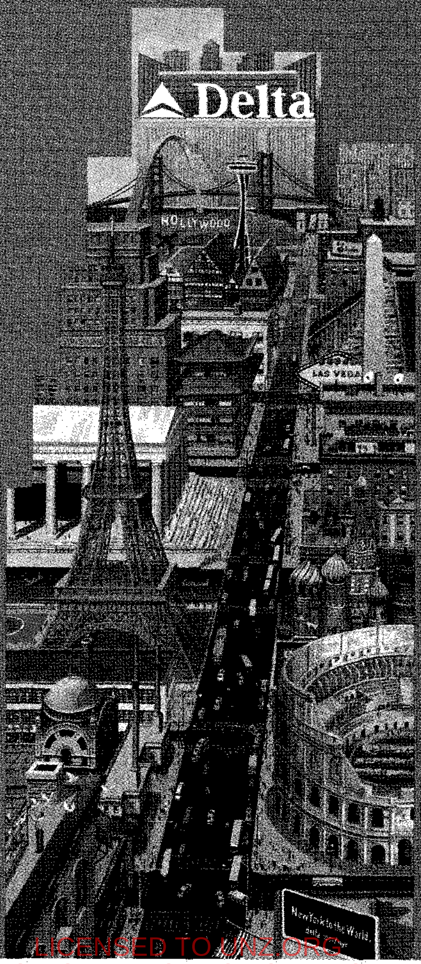


A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE DEVASTATION

Since 1965, life expectancy for Russian men has decreased by nearly six years. And now there is AIDS.

BY MICHAEL SPECTER

The first days of spring are electrifying in St. Petersburg. The winters are hard and dark and long, and when the light finally returns each year thousands of people pour onto Nevsky Prospekt and into the squares in front of the Winter Palace and St. Isaac’s Cathedral. Petersburg has always been more open and more openly European than other Russian cities, and the day I arrived this spring was the first on which men in shirtsleeves could fling Frisbees across the endless avenues. I settled into one of the many coffee shops along the Neva River—they are a recent innovation—and noticed something else that was new: a large stack of pamphlets advertising an H.I.V. support group. AIDS is not a subject that people talk about much in Russia. Even though the epidemic is spreading here more rapidly than anywhere else in the world, there are virtually no public-service ads on television about it, and the government spends next to nothing on prevention, treatment, education, or care. This year, the entire budget for H.I.V.-related matters is a little more than five rubles per person, less than the cost of a pack of cigarettes.

St. Petersburg has been a rare exception to what seems like an official policy of ignorance and neglect. The city is responsible for the first program in Russia that sends buses to deliver information—and clean needles—to people who cannot be reached in other ways. It also pays for health workers to travel to schools, hospitals, and even construction sites to inform people about their choices. Condoms are available, and often free. Almost two years ago, St. Petersburg opened the country’s first AIDS hospice. There is still only one. Funded with local money, it sits not far from the city’s Botkin Infectious Disease Hospital, one of the largest such facilities in Russia. The hospice is small; it has just sixty beds, and they are not filled. The director, Olga Leonova, is a valiant woman with an impossible job: trying to assure patients that they have a future while convincing everyone else that AIDS threatens to turn Russia back into the Third World country it was before the Second World War. “You can see it getting worse every day,” she told me as we walked around the floor one morning. “It’s not just drug addicts now.” For years, H.I.V. infection in Russia was driven almost exclusively by shared needles. “We are seeing pregnant mothers and people we would never have even tested in the past.”

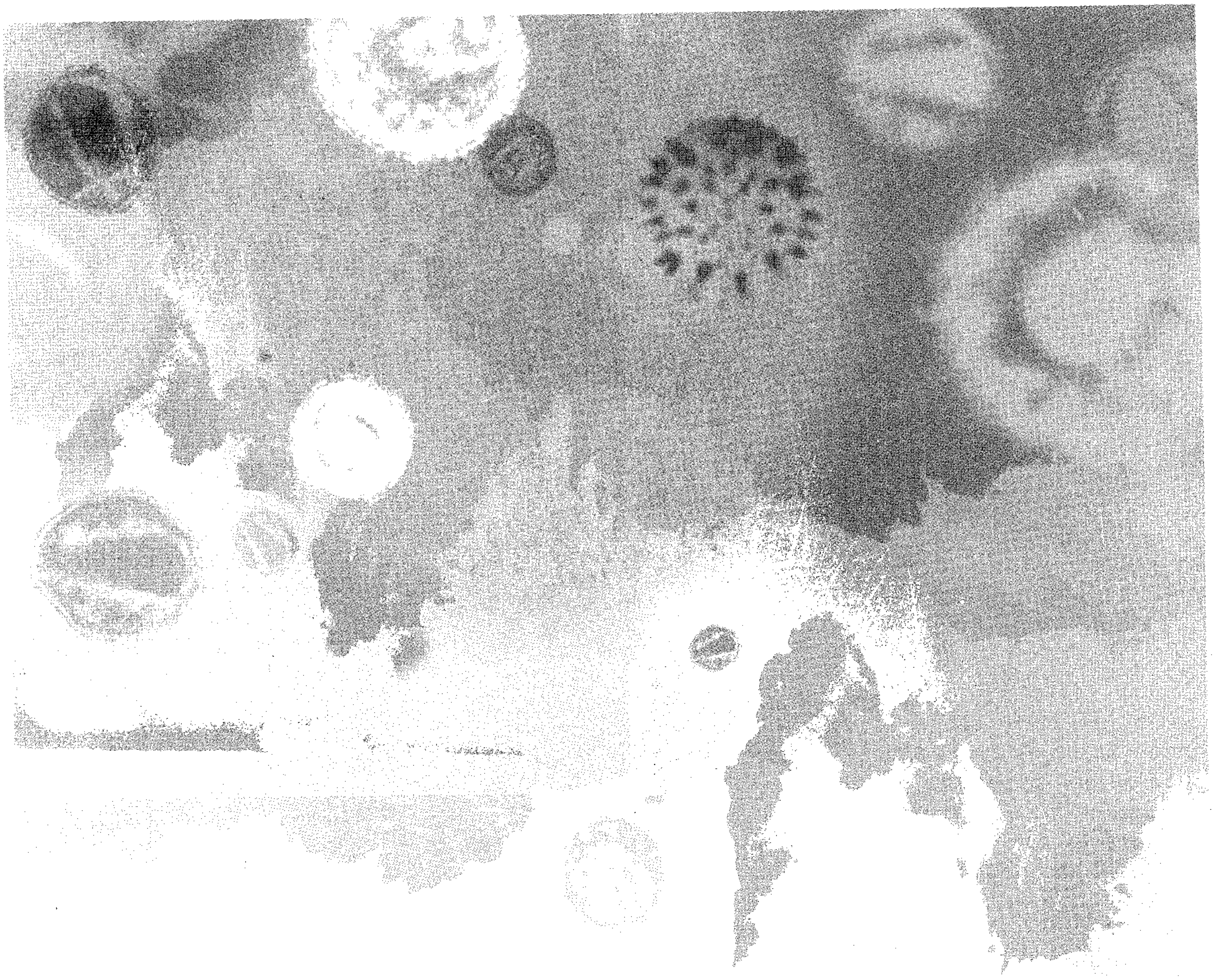
Dr. Leonova is a middle-aged woman with chestnut hair and hazel eyes. She wore stylish striped pants under her lab coat, and her fingernails were painted gunmetal gray. She is proud of her ward, and enjoyed introducing patients. One of them, a frail boy with sandy-colored hair, had tried to kill himself, because he thought he had no hope of living. With drugs provided by the hospice, he would soon go home. Cases like his are common. “Most of our patients have nothing when they get here,” Dr. Leonova said. “They are dirty and hungry. The first thing we do is take their clothes and burn them.” We had returned to her office, and while we talked she stood at the window, staring at the birch trees. “I worry that AIDS will send us over the edge—that we will become a country too sick to cope. Most people don’t get it. Many of those who do understand have left. My five closest friends now live in the United States and Israel. My generation has no children. Husbands are dead. And now the young . . . ” Her voice trailed off. Dr. Leonova is an optimist, but she knows that the illness she encounters each day is a sign of an even larger problem—one that threatens Russia at least as seriously today as the Cold War did a generation ago. “We are on the front line of a war,” she said. “This city was under siege by Hitler for years. We lived through Stalin. We have to prevail, and I think, somehow, we will. We don’t have a choice.”

From Tambov, the old Soviet breadbasket, to the Pacific port city of Vladivostok, and even in Moscow, which has become a world showcase for conspicuous displays of wealth, Russians are dying in numbers and at ages that seem impossible to believe. Heart disease, alcohol consumption, and tuberculosis are epidemic. So is addiction to nicotine. You won’t see many pregnant women on the streets; Russia has one of the lowest peacetime birth rates in modern history. Long life is one of the central characteristics of an advanced society; in Russia, men often die too young to collect a pension. In the United States, even during the Great Depression mortality rates continued to drop, and the same has been true for all other developed countries. Except Russia. In the past decade, life expectancy has fallen so drastically that a boy born in Russia today can expect to live just to the age of fifty-eight, younger than if he were born in Bangladesh. No other educated, industrialized nation ever has suffered such a prolonged, catastrophic growth in death rates.

In 1991, on the day the Soviet Union was dissolved, Russia’s population stood at a hundred and forty-nine million. Without the huge wave of immigration from the former Soviet republics which followed, the country would have lost nearly a million people each year since then. If Russia is lucky, by 2050 the population will have fallen by only a third, to a hundred million. That is the most optimistic government scenario. More realistic predictions suggest that the number will be closer to seventy-five

JOHN RITTER

Even the government’s estimates—which ignore the AIDS epidemic—say that Russia will lose a third of its population by 2050.



DRAT! SOMEONE STOLE MY BIKE!

or eighty million—a little more than half the current population. And none of these figures allow for the impact of AIDS, which remains, in many ways, unrecognized and unreckoned with. The World Bank has estimated that by 2020 at least five million people will be infected with H.I.V.; a more pessimistic, but equally plausible, figure is fourteen million. Even without AIDS as a factor, working-age people are starting to disappear. (In the United States, fifteen per cent of men die before they retire; in Russia, nearly fifty per cent die.) By 2015, the number of children under the age of fifteen will have fallen by a quarter. There will be at least five million fewer people in the workforce. The Russian Ministry of Education projects a thirty-per-cent drop in school enrollment. Russian women already bear scarcely more than half the number of children needed to maintain the current population, and the situation will soon get worse. Between 2010 and 2025, the number of women between twenty and twenty-nine—the primary childbearing years—will plummet from eleven and a half million to six million. Unless there is sudden new immigration on a gigantic scale, fertility will fall even from today's anemic level.

A serious AIDS epidemic promises to compound each of these problems immensely: of all H.I.V. infections registered in Russia, ninety-nine per cent have been reported in the past five years, and sixty-five per cent in the past three years. Just at the time when the country will begin to reel under the burden of its shrinking labor force and an increasingly disabled population, it will have to find a way to cope with millions of AIDS patients, too.

The Russian government has recorded two hundred and ninety-two thousand people with H.I.V., but doctors and AIDS workers estimate that there are at least seven hundred and fifty thousand. Most epidemiologists, including those from the United Nations AIDS Program and the World Health Organization, believe that there may well be twice that number. Russia's spotty system of medical accounting makes it impossible to know. People can be treated only in cities where they are "registered" as residents. Official statistics are based on cases—whoever walks through the clinic door. Yet millions of people live illegally in places where they cannot register—in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other big cities—and so they are not counted and therefore cannot be helped.

"You can tell a politician that this country is going to vanish in twenty years if we don't start dealing with the AIDS epidemic now, but they don't listen," Vadim Pokrovsky told me. Pokrovsky is in charge of the Russian Federal AIDS Center, in Moscow, and for two decades he has been the public face of Russia's efforts to curtail the epidemic. "They only pay attention when people are dropping dead in the streets. That is going to happen. We can no longer pretend it won't. It's just a matter now of how many will die." So far, that message has not sunk in. No senior Kremlin official was willing to discuss AIDS policies with me, because, as one explained, "we don't have an AIDS policy to discuss. There is no plan, no goals, nothing. It's not even on our radar."

For most of its history, Russia has defined itself physically: as the biggest country on earth and as the place where Europe and Asia come together. Today, however, a nation's significance is determined more by people than by land. Twenty-five years ago, the population of Russia was a hundred and forty million, and that of its neighbor Pakistan was eighty million. Within twenty years, that ratio will have reversed itself. If United Nations projections hold true, even Yemen will soon have more people than Russia. The prevailing view, initially, was that Russia's sharp decline would be brief—a reflection of the chaos and uncertainty confronted in the nineteen-nineties by a new and deeply troubled society. But the trend actually began decades ago. In an era of antibiotics, molecular medicine, and universal literacy, the life of the average Russian man is almost six years shorter today than it was in 1965. Just fifteen years ago, the Soviet Union's status as a superpower was unquestioned; today, the country is so weak that it is hard to see how it could ever regain that status.

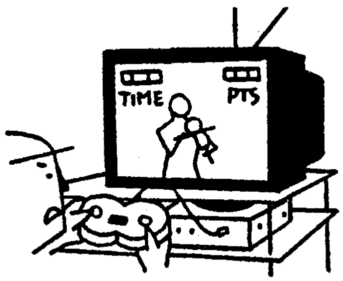
Russia's desperation seems to be driving the country in exactly the opposite direction. Last month, in the southern town of Beslan, Chechen separatists killed hundreds of children they had taken hostage at a school. Federal troops were given so little support during the siege that they had to borrow bullets from local civilians. The nation responded with shock, but President Vladimir Putin responded cynically: he seized greater power for himself.

More than military or political power, however, more than guns, revolutions, or monarchic decrees, demography is what has often shaped the relationships between countries. It was, after all, an unknown epidemic that wiped out a quarter of the Athenian army and at least as many of its citizens in 430-429 B.C. and helped end Athens' reign as the capital of the world. Plague and cholera took tens of millions of lives, and played an essential role in creating the balance of power that existed in Europe for centuries. Even the size of China's population can be attributed in part to its relative distance from epidemics that devastated other countries. The economic future of a sickly nation with a shrinking population cannot be bright. "Russian health statistics are so bad that we have all run them, many times," Nicholas Eberstadt, a demographer at the American Enterprise Institute who has written widely on Russia's health crisis, told me. "They never get better. The country just keeps going down—in numbers, in health, and in its possibilities for the future. It seems to get worse every year, and I don't see even the slightest suggestion that that is going to change. Russia, like Africa, I am very sorry to say, is taking a detour from the rest of humanity as far as progress is measured by improving general health."

I made my first visit to Moscow in 1990, and a few years later I moved there. As a medical reporter for much of the previous decade, I had written about the emerging AIDS epidemic in the United States. In the nineteen-eighties, most Americans didn't want to know about it. Even by the decade's end, several years after Rock Hudson's death—and not long before Magic Johnson's infection set off a second wave of fear and anxiety—the governing sentiment was simple: only gay men and drug addicts got AIDS. The rest of us could safely turn our heads and shudder. Ronald Reagan was President for more than six years before he used the word in a speech. By that time, twenty thousand Americans had died and more than half a million were infected. It was already clear that H.I.V. would kill tens of millions of Africans. When I first visited Moscow, just as the Soviet Union was lurching toward its demise, I assumed that the Russians, with their new freedoms and openness, would have a problem much like ours.

That assumption was, of course, wrong. The Soviets hadn't made their first AIDS death public until late in 1988, and the government seemed at least as interested in the fact that the St. Petersburg woman who died was a prostitute—with many foreign customers—as it was in exploring the medical consequences of her disease. Soon after her death, the official news agency, TASS, reported that the woman had become a prostitute in the nineteen-seventies and had had many African clients. "An autopsy showed that she was four weeks pregnant, which indicates that she did not give up sex even at the extreme stage of the disease," TASS said at the time. AIDS was portrayed as the most ruinous manifestation of Western decadence. The Supreme Soviet had already introduced some of the strictest anti-AIDS laws in the world, among them a five-year prison term for infected people who knowingly exposed others to the disease.

The AIDS epidemic started slowly in Russia—for many years it was hard for foreigners to travel there—and by 1990 the Soviet authorities had registered fewer than five hundred cases, including dozens of children accidentally infected by physicians who repeatedly used contaminated syringes. Like nearly all Soviet (and Russian) health statistics, the number of those infected was no doubt a serious underestimate, based on the questionable system of case reporting. Yet Russia had been given a rare opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others, and to protect itself from a virus that has now infected at least sixty million people worldwide and killed a third of them—as many as the Black Death. "Because we were not part of the first wave of the epidemic, we were in a privileged position, with several years to prepare," Vadim Pokrovsky told me at the time. Pokrovsky was then the chief of the Soviet Center for AIDS Epidemiology. He went on to say that the task of educating the public about AIDS and about sex was formidable. Infectious diseases don't move forward in measured steps. They grow exponentially—and, in the case of AIDS, silently—gathering momentum until, as in countries from Haiti to South Africa, the epidemic becomes too forceful to stop.



By the end of the eighties, Mikhail Gorbachev had begun to turn the Soviet Union into a country where people were permitted to know the truths that governed their lives. The 1986 accident at the nuclear power station in Chernobyl forced the Soviets to introduce some degree of honesty into public affairs. After decades of official lies—about genetics, the environment, the health of the population, even about which way the rivers ought to run, and whether it was possible to reverse their course—the Kremlin had little choice. Pokrovsky told me in 1990 that he felt the country was ready to do what was needed, and, in fact, the press had begun to write frequently about H.I.V. While the absolute number of infections was low, however, Pokrovsky had no illusions that it would stay that way if the country did not act immediately.

Throughout the nineteen-nineties, though, AIDS seemed of secondary importance. Communism had been replaced by a sort of criminal capitalism; there was a war in Chechnya, and a stock-market crash and a subsequent economic implosion, and also epochal environmental and health problems. People were dying of stress, of heart attacks. Entire villages disappeared or turned into drunk tanks. Despite the lack of resources, Russian physicians are often vigorous, well trained, and imaginative. They did their best to cope with an endless stream of accident victims and the results of constant alcohol poisoning. There are better-equipped hospitals in Africa, however. I once stood in an operating room at the Semashko Emergency Hospital, in Tula, a city two hundred kilometres from Moscow, and watched as cancer surgeons removed a tumor from a woman's chest. In the corner of the room, on the floor, sat the mechanism they used to sterilize their instruments: a twenty-five-dollar hot plate.

I went to see Pokrovsky recently, for the first time in years. He was holding a press conference in Moscow for a new AIDS initiative by the European Union. There are many efforts in Russia now to focus attention on the epidemic—from the E.U., from the United Nations AIDS Program, from American researchers, and from multinational relief organizations. The only groups that seem to be missing are Russian. Pokrovsky talked, as he often has, of an inevitable emergency that has the potential to destroy the country's already fragile public-health network. He noted that Russia's demographic crisis added special urgency to the task. Afterward, there were only a couple of desultory questions, and we adjourned to a nearby office. Pokrovsky is meticulous and soft-spoken, with a permanently sad smile on his broad face. His father, Dr. Valentin Pokrovsky, is the president of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences. His mother is also a physician. They, too, have sounded alarms about AIDS, and they, too, have been ignored. Last year, the elder Pokrovsky appeared before the Duma to say that there may be at least a million and a half H.I.V.-positive Russians, and that in cities like Irkutsk and Samara at least one per cent of the adults were already infected. The speech changed nothing.

Pokrovsky finds himself saying today exactly what he said in 1990. "I never imagined we would have three hundred thousand H.I.V. infections," he told me. "Fifteen years ago, I was certain we would see the scope of the problem and do what was necessary to stop it. And now I am in the position of saying to myself, 'I am certain that we can prevent millions of infections in this country.' But sometimes I wonder. Why am I certain? What has happened to give me confidence? And, really, the truth is we should all be afraid, because we have done very little here in Russia. If the situation does not improve, there will be at least five to seven million cases within fifteen to twenty years. Seven million people who are sick and dying of AIDS. And maybe many more. We will long ago have passed our ability to pay for treatment of any significance." The Russian government hasn't put much pressure on pharmaceutical companies; consequently, the country has some of the highest prices in the world for the antiretroviral drugs that have become the standard treatment for H.I.V. The U.N. AIDS Program has estimated that seventy thousand people in Russia need such treatment now, yet only fifteen hundred Russians actually receive the drugs, and almost all of them are in Moscow, by far the richest city.

"Our society doesn't understand what it's dealing with," Pokrovsky continued. "It just isn't ready. We spend a million dollars a year on awareness programs. We should be spending seventy million."

It isn't easy to make the case that AIDS requires special attention in a nation besieged by other troubles. Countries like Kenya, China, and India are faced with so many fundamental challenges—starting with the need for clean water and the ability to prevent the most basic childhood diseases—that AIDS just seems like another in a long list of intractable maladies. "When you tell President Putin that we should spend more money on AIDS than on heart disease, which kills millions of our citizens now, he will ask why. And the answer—that it will kill a few million people in twenty years—is not going to be good enough for him."

Putin is what the Russians call a *poryadochny chelovek*, a man of order and discipline. He has nearly total control of the government; the country remains a place where decisions flow from the top, and until the President makes AIDS an issue the apparatchiks who spend their lives trying to anticipate his desires are unlikely to do so, either. "This is the first country with a declining population that AIDS has hit in this way," Steven Solnick, the Ford Foundation's chief representative in Russia, told me. "And that changes everything. It makes the problem more urgent, of course, but in the Kremlin it creates a complicated political dynamic. AIDS gives the forces that are hostile to change a reason to enforce a conservative social order. It offers an excuse to complain about drug addiction, to stress conservative views on family values; it encourages people to consider placing restrictions on abortion.

"When Putin has mentioned AIDS, he has done so in the same breath as drug addiction," Solnick went on. "He is just not a man who is going to go out there and say 'We have a problem and we need help.' " On my way to Moscow, I had stopped in Geneva to visit Peter Piot, an unusually understated and diplomatic man, who is in charge of the U.N. AIDS Program. Neither Putin nor any of his deputies have been willing to meet with Piot, something that Presidents and Prime Ministers do nearly every week. "No country with this important an AIDS problem has done so little," Piot said. "It's my biggest nightmare."

John Tedstrom, who is the president of a new organization called Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS, told me when we met in Moscow that one of his goals was to persuade Putin to give a speech about AIDS. A few days later, the Kremlin asked him to provide some paragraphs for the President to include in his annual State of the Nation address. I ran into Tedstrom on the street near his office that afternoon and he was excited. When the speech was delivered, at the end of May, Putin never uttered the word "AIDS," though he did find time to warn foreign human-rights organizations to stay out of Russia's business.

It will be at least a decade before the full force of the epidemic is felt in Russia. The virus can take that long to destroy the immune system. Until then, a person can seem healthy and may even have no idea that he is about to die—and that is the case with hundreds of thousands of Russians today. By 2010, many of them will need daily antiretroviral treatment.

According to Russia's Federal AIDS Center, last year the number of H.I.V. infections actually fell by some twenty-five per cent, but that is partly because the central government has stopped supplying H.I.V.-test kits to Russian regions; many local governments simply can't afford to buy them, so fewer people are tested. "We have been trying to identify what office in the Ministry of Health is responsible for AIDS," Marina Semenchenko, the doctor in charge of the World Health Organization's AIDS efforts in Russia, told me. "There is no one."

Evidence that AIDS is spreading into the wider population is overwhelming. As recently as 2000, ninety-six per cent of officially registered new cases were

BOY WITH A HEADSET

He is wearing baggy shorts and a loud T-shirt
and singing along to his headset on Broadway.
Every now and then he glances back at me,
a middle-aged father weaving through traffic behind him.

He is a fifteen-year-old in the city—no more, no less—
but I imagine him as a colorful unnamed bird
warbling his difference from the robins and sparrows
and scissoring past the venders on every corner.

I keep thinking of him as a wild fledgling
who tilts precariously on one wing
and peers back at me from the sudden height
before sailing out over the treetops.

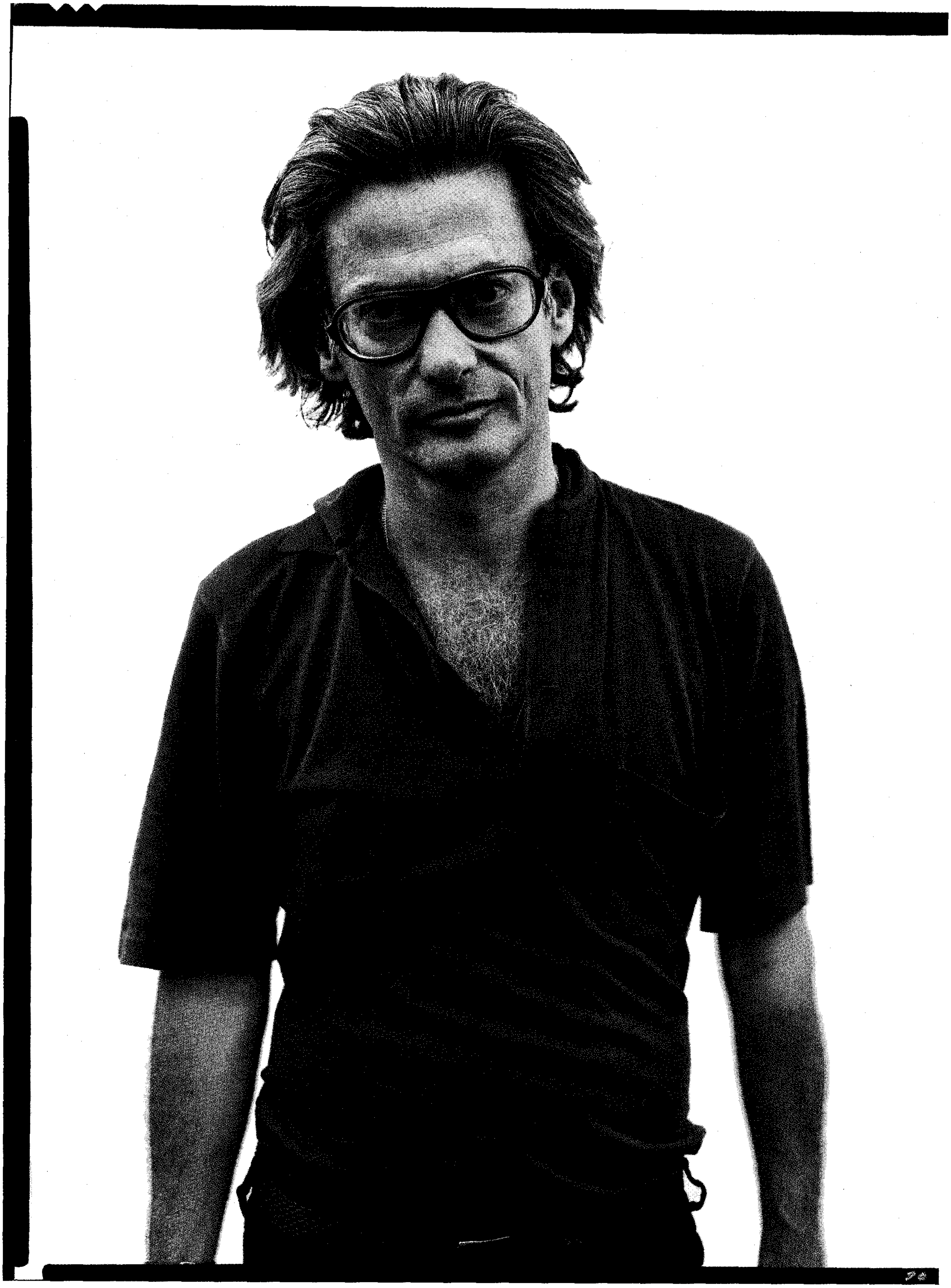
—*Edward Hirsch*

attributed to intravenous drug use. By 2002, the number had fallen to seventy-six per cent. Last year, it fell again, to sixty-four per cent. The male-to-female ratio of infection also began to shift in 2002, and there was a two-hundred-and-thirty-per-cent increase in the number of babies born to H.I.V.-infected mothers. There has been yet another ominous sign: the rising rate of syphilis infections, which has proved to be an infallible barometer for the incidence of H.I.V. Greece reported no syphilis infections in 2001; the Netherlands reported less than one case per hundred thousand people; Turkey had five cases per hundred thousand; Iceland had just over eleven. Russia, however, had a hundred and forty-four cases. The H.I.V. epidemic passes a critical boundary when one per cent of adults become infected; that figure has turned out to be a sort of trip wire. After that, the virus becomes much more difficult to contain. In many parts of Russia, that one-per-cent figure has now been reached.

In the middle of April, I flew to Irkutsk, just in time for the last snowstorm of the season. Within a couple of hours, several inches were on the ground; then, almost as quickly, the snow disappeared, blown away in gusts. The city, sixty-five kilometres from the shores of Lake Baikal, was dark, cold, and uninviting. Baikal is the spiritual home of modern Russian nationalism and the emotional center of Siberia; during the Soviet era, a group of writers from the region emerged as almost accepted voices of protest. They never criticized the Kremlin directly, but by focussing on the land—the natural, mystical beauty of historic Russia—they were able to implicitly criticize the regime's disregard for the people. Irkutsk is not industrial or academic, like Novosibirsk; it's a one-horse town that just grew. The city has its share of oppressively monumental Soviet architecture—memorials to fallen soldiers of the motherland, the stolid headquarters of the Communist Party (now the administration offices for the regional government), and scores of the cinder-block housing projects that helped make residential life in the Soviet Union such a numbing experience. But even Stalin couldn't fully erase the wildness of Siberia, and one can still find some of the original wooden houses that were erected when Nicholas I exiled the Decembrists from St. Petersburg, in the nineteenth century. Many of the houses are falling apart—they tend to sink deeper into the ground with every spring thaw. But they bolster the city's image as a sort of frontier outpost between the European part of Russia and the wilds to the east.

For centuries, Irkutsk has been one of Siberia's most important trading centers, with merchandise moving constantly along the routes between China and Russia. Now, because it has become a convenient transit point for heroin from Afghanistan, the AIDS problem has become more urgent than in most other Russian cities. Drugs have flooded the streets since the late nineties, and these days you can buy a dose of heroin for a hundred rubles, or about three and a half dollars—an attractive offer in a city full of unemployed young people with little prospect of a future. Between 1991 and 1998, health officials in the Irkutsk region registered fewer than fifty people infected with H.I.V. By the spring of 1999, a state of emergency had been declared. Doctors diagnosed dozens of new infections every day. Last year, the region, with two per cent of the Russian population, registered more than twenty per cent of the children born to H.I.V.-positive mothers.

There is information about AIDS available in Irkutsk, but nobody seems to know where to find it. You certainly don't see public-service announcements on state-run television or hear them on the radio. I never noticed a billboard or read a newspaper advertisement. (For that matter, newspapers and magazines have largely stopped writing about AIDS, too.) Nobody hands out pamphlets or canvasses night clubs or explains the risks to schoolchildren. Not surprisingly, since very few people have actually fallen ill, fear is limited. "Sometimes I think I don't know anybody who isn't using or hasn't used heroin," a young H.I.V.-positive woman named Sveta told me one afternoon at the local Red Cross drop-in center. Sveta is twenty-two, with long reddish-brown hair. The day we met, she was wearing a short leather jacket and green corduroy pants. She had a gold wedding band on her left hand and a large green ring on her right. Sveta has a three-year-old son, Simyon, and she told me that she had tried heroin a few times with a friend, out of boredom. She said that her husband was not infected and that they were both unemployed. "I didn't know you couldn't share needles," she told me. "It just seemed like the obvious thing to do." She said that she was grateful that her son is not infected, but that she took no particular precautions. "I was lucky," she said. "Most of the people don't care about their health. They just want drugs. Well, there are no jobs here. Nothing much to do, and there are lots of drugs. If you go to school, you



have to pay in order to pass your exams. I finished school, but who wants me? To get a job in a shop, you have to bribe somebody or pay them part of your wages. So that means I can work in a kiosk on the street." Sveta comes into the city from a village about an hour away to see a psychologist whom the Red Cross makes available for counselling. "I have a lot down inside of me, and it's good to talk to somebody," she said.

We were sitting in the tiny office of the drop-in center, in a muddy courtyard off Karl Marx Street. The Red Cross was the only organization in Irkutsk that seemed to understand the seriousness of the threat posed by H.I.V. Everywhere else, I encountered willful blindness and almost complete denial. "Every tenth person in Russia believes that AIDS doesn't exist," Marina Akulova, the leader of the Irkutsk Red Cross, told me when I asked about the attitude. "Another ten per cent believe it can't possibly affect them."

I was even told, by Aleksandr Goliusov, of the Ministry of Health, that the infection rate in Russia wasn't nearly as bad as Western experts have asserted, and he implied that the West was simply trying to humiliate Russia by inflating the figures and comparing them to Africa's. He was not the only person to say this to me. "Isn't much of this coming from your C.I.A.?" he asked, with some justification. The American intelligence community has for several years been openly concerned about the security threat that a rampant epidemic in Russia would pose; it is hardly a controversial assessment, though, since Russia maintains an enormous arsenal of nuclear weapons. "I can only work with the numbers we have," Goliusov said. "We receive requests for service and medication based on those numbers. The C.I.A. has issued a report saying that from three to five million people are infected with H.I.V. in Russia. That simply is ridiculous. I can agree that not every case is reported or counted properly. But the number that foreign observers say need medicine now is fifty thousand. That is just wrong. What the international organizations do is they apply mathematical models, and they said if there are seven hundred and fifty thousand infected you should have fifty thousand who

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POSTSCRIPT

RICHARD AVEDON

To know Dick Avedon was to know the sun. He radiated out, early and daily, on a circle of friends and family and colleagues, who drew on his light and warmth for sustenance. When he died, last week, at the age of eighty-one, some light seemed to go out in many lives and around many pleasures. For, though he was incandescent in his presence, he was surprisingly domestic in his enthusiasms; he believed in family as passionately as he believed in art, and could leave an hour-long conversation about Goya's horrors to talk with the same avidity about how to light a room or roast a leg of lamb.

In the arc of a career that stretched for sixty full years—from the epoch-making postwar Parisian fashion photographs in *Harper's Bazaar* to the exhibition of his portraits at the Metropolitan Museum two years ago—he suffered, just a little, from the knowledge that the vigor of his presence might eclipse the rigor of his work. But the two sides of his nature, and his psyche, were really one. Though he held a tragic view of life, he brought to that view a grace and mischief and energy that stripped the existentialist position of its sourness and made despair about the final outcome of life a reason to live all the more. His best-known photographs, from the Parisienne leaping over a puddle in high heels to his dying father's desperate face, all share a belief in the heroism of self-assertion, a belief that every leap is a leap of faith. His definitive portraits of the powerful and the powerless—encompassing, in a manner almost without equal in the history of portraiture, the artistic and political hierarchies of the past half century of American life—were almost Roman in their severe authority. But they were not the negation of his dancing and delighted fashion photographs, as critics sometimes thought: the portraits were the solid, mineral form of what was, in the fashion pictures, pure liquid. Both were studies in human performance: how we prepare a face to face the world, and how the world shows itself in our faces. As long as people remain curious about life in the twentieth century, they will turn to Avedon's photographs to see how it looked, and what it meant.

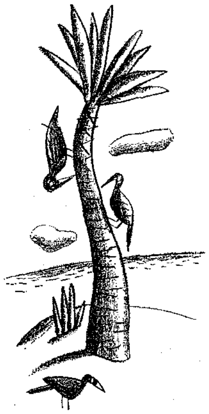
When Tina Brown brought him to *The New Yorker*, in 1992, to be its first staff photographer, she was rupturing a long-standing taboo against photography, and even those who loved his work might have had their doubts. But his photographs, in their epigrammatic compression of a whole subject into a single black-and-white image, were *New Yorker* profiles in miniature, and within weeks it was as if they had always graced these pages. His subsequent work for the magazine ran from an inventory of the faces of Kennedy's Camelot thirty years later to the enchanted portraits of singers and actors that he made in the past year. In the last weeks of his life, he was completing his most ambitious project for the magazine, a survey of America on the eve of the election, to be called "Democracy." He was getting ready to take one more portrait when life fled from him. If to know him was to feel in the presence of the sun, to look back on his life is to see that what we really experienced was the track of a comet: breaking barriers between spheres, shattering fixed orbits, bringing joy and amazement and portents of change to those looking on below, and coming to rest at last in earth, still fully alight.

—*Adam Gopnik*

Richard Avedon, summer, 1975.

are sick. But that is theory, and reality is what I get coming into hospitals and clinics."

Russia is one of the world's best-educated nations—the literacy rate is above ninety-nine per cent. But, in a poll conducted last year, two-thirds of the respondents who knew that AIDS is caused by H.I.V. also believed that it can be contracted through kissing; a majority of Russians think you can get AIDS from a cough; and three-quarters believe that the virus can be transmitted by mosquitoes. None of that, of course, is true. While I was in Moscow, two acquaintances of mine—both successful professionals with access to people at the highest levels of the Kremlin and of Russian life—were astonished to learn that it takes many years for a person to become sick after being infected with H.I.V. That the virus goes about its business silently, destroying the human immune system without warning, is one of its defining characteristics. If there were no time lag between infection and illness, AIDS would not have been so insidious, and so difficult to understand. One Russian woman I have known for years, a prominent liberal, said, "AIDS might be a good thing, in a way, because it is killing people who only destroy the country anyway."



She was talking about drug addicts. The Russian government has been particularly unwilling to treat substance abusers as citizens in need of help instead of as criminals. A highly critical report by Human Rights Watch noted earlier this year that H.I.V.-infected addicts are often barred from the type of education and outreach programs designed to help them. Even in prison, which itself is a notorious incubator for H.I.V. and for tuberculosis, inmates rarely have access to treatment. The report argues persuasively that the government has made the epidemic far worse by routinely mistreating and victimizing those who are infected. The attitude toward drug use is so uniformly harsh that the people at the Red Cross in Irkutsk were reluctant to send me into neighborhoods where heroin is bought and sold. They consider it dangerous, and, one of them told me honestly, the city has been receiving bad publicity. Nonetheless, I was introduced to Misha and Alyosha, both former heroin addicts in their thirties who travel frequently to Trety Posyolok, the neighborhood where heroin is sold openly. They were willing to let me tag along when they delivered clean needles to a friend who distributes them there.

We flagged a taxi. The driver raised an eyebrow when he heard the destination. But money is money, so he nodded and we piled in. As we talked, the driver immediately jumped into the conversation. "One day," he said, "I had a guy come in and he wanted to buy drugs. So I said O.K. and I took him up the hill." The driver fell silent, then continued, "He went into a house to buy his stuff and then he came out, and before I could say a word he had a needle in his arm and he was shooting up in my taxi." This was a couple of years ago, he recalled, at a time when the heroin sweeping into the area was particularly potent. The passenger overdosed and started to choke. "He was dying right in the back of my car," he said. "I had to rush him to the hospital and explain what happened. I am lucky they didn't throw me in jail." We asked if the man had lived. "I don't know," the driver said. It was clear that he didn't care. We drove across the Angara River, and soon we passed a line of cabs. "Heroin taxis," he said. "These are the cars willing to take people to Trety Posyolok." He told us that most cabs didn't want to bother, and that since his near-death incident a couple of years earlier he hadn't been back.

Trety Posyolok is not much more than a collection of wooden houses, muddy, half-paved roads, and seedy kiosks scattered along the southern edge of Irkutsk. The Posyolok—the word means "settlement"—is part of the city now, but it was created in the nineteen-sixties as a separate village, the third in a row of identical places all thrown together to house workers assigned to build the power station that still dominates the area. Few of the streets have names. Almost everyone who ventures there knows where he is going and why: it's the best place in the city to buy heroin and to pick up a fresh *dvoushka,* one of the two-millimetre syringes favored by Irkutsk drug addicts.

We drove down a narrow, shabby street. Garbage was strewn everywhere. Gypsy touts and homeless women stood on the corners rubbing their hands together to keep from freezing. The moment we parked, a toothless man wearing a Los Angeles Lakers sweatshirt approached. "You want it?" he asked. "A hundred rubles. Very clean." Drug deals are done both on the streets and in the houses. Each location has its dangers; the main street leads to a hill, and at its end is the regional police academy. We watched as, every few minutes, fresh-faced recruits, none more than eighteen years old, walked awkwardly down the hill, guns strapped tightly to their hips, as they pretended not to see what was happening all around them. Misha and Alyosha took me to a rickety old house halfway up the street. Two large but seemingly docile dogs responded to the doorbell. They were quickly followed by their owner, a thin, hawk-faced man with a ponytail and a cigarette dangling from his lips. The man's name was Volodya, and he is the most effective preventive weapon against AIDS in the neighborhood, because each week he hands out clean needles to anyone who asks.

Distributing clean needles occupies a gray area in Russian law. Most people assume that it encourages drug use, and many officials oppose it for that reason. (In fact, the participants in a major AIDS conference held in St. Petersburg this May took a stand *against* distributing clean needles.) In some cities, including St. Petersburg and Irkutsk, AIDS organizations have made efforts to explain to the police why they are beneficial. Volodya says that he isn't hassled much anymore, though police in Irkutsk are certainly not eager to talk about their approach to needle exchange or narcotics. (I tried to meet with narcotics-squad officers while I was there. They told me that they could speak only with the permission of Moscow, which I had not obtained. I then called the head of the local police. He also refused to see me.) Volodya was hardly surprised to hear this. "All we have to do is pay some bribes," he said with a shrug. "Sometimes it's just give them condoms and other times money. But if people come to my house to get needles and they have drugs they can be busted, and so can I." There was a knock on the door. Two men stood silently on the stoop. Volodya pulled out a shoebox full of neatly packaged two-millimetre syringes. Then he took a few individually wrapped alcohol swabs from his pocket. The men took them, nodded sullenly, and were gone. The entire transaction lasted less than thirty seconds.

Volodya has used drugs for years, but his main interest in life is heavy-metal music. He has nearly a thousand records, and he plays them day and night. He showed me the cover of the album that was currently rattling the windows of the house, "1000 Percent Metal Ballads." He talked at great length about the relative merits of Metallica, Megadeth, and Aerosmith before mentioning that he had travelled to Moscow in 1995 to see a performance by Deep Purple—his favorite group by far. "It was worth every minute and all the costs," he said with a smile of the deepest possible satisfaction.

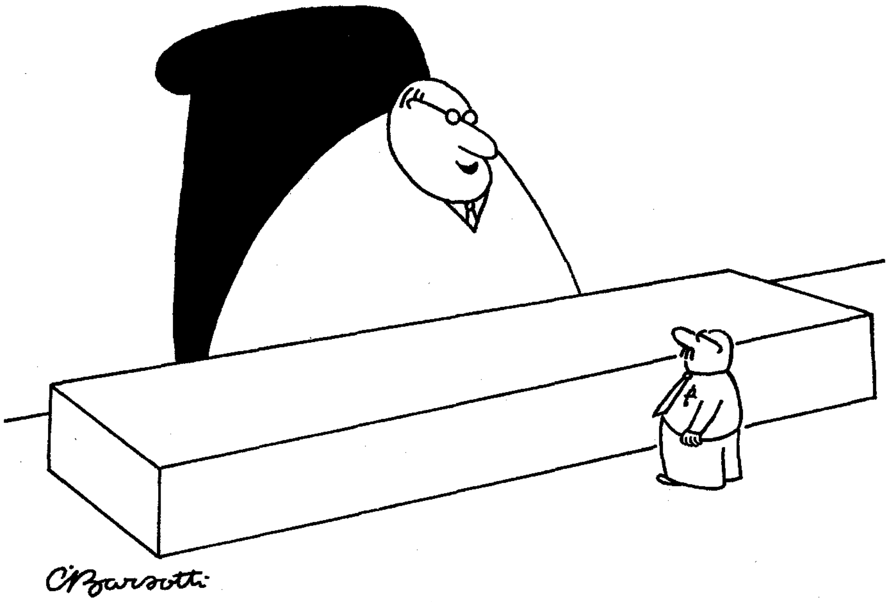
Volodya is available all day to pass out clean needles to anyone who knocks. "Why?" I asked, waving away a thick cloud of cigarette smoke. "Clearly, it's dangerous. Why bother?"

He looked mystified. "I can deal with the police," he said. "I have lots of friends, they all use drugs, and I would like them to stay alive."

The next afternoon, I drove to the Irkutsk Infectious Disease Hospital. The complex is far from the center of the city and is difficult to reach. It was nearly deserted. Every significant city in Russia has an AIDS center. Moscow's is a crumbling shack situated near the back of the Second Hospital for Infectious Diseases, the main hospital for H.I.V. in the capital. It was marked by a small plaque. Irkutsk's center was in better shape, but it is tucked away on the grounds of the hospital complex, behind a large building, and is marked by the smallest imaginable sign, written in white paint on the side of a red brick building that almost nobody ever sees. The writing looks like graffiti (except that nobody writes graffiti that small): "Tsentr SPID"—SPID being the Russian acronym for AIDS. I had come to see the chief of the region's AIDS unit, Dr. Boris Tsvetkov. He was a pleasant middle-aged man, and he welcomed me with the type of hospitality that was common among mid-level Soviet officials: he made tea, took a box of chocolates from his desk, tore off the cellophane, and insisted that I eat.

Tsvetkov told me that the severity of the problem in Irkutsk was often exaggerated. "All the responsible parties, from the police to health organizations, work together to fight the virus," he said. "We coöperate." I asked why the police refused to talk about the relationship between drug use and AIDS. He shrugged. "That's a difficult issue," he said, but he would not elaborate. He acknowledged that in Irkutsk, as in many other parts of Russia, a fundamental shift is now under way, with the epidemic moving from its base among drug users to people who are infected through heterosexual contact. Statistics are collected in a haphazard way, but they tell a story that isn't hard to understand: in 1999, more than ninety per cent of those who tested positive for H.I.V. in the region were intravenous drug users. Today, that number is sixty-five per cent. "And I know that we are able to catch at most only half of the infected people," Tsvetkov said. He added that doctors were treating fewer than two dozen people in the region with antiretroviral drugs. "It just hasn't become that big an issue yet," he said. I asked how, in a city of more than half a million, with one of the country's highest AIDS-case rates, there could be so few people on antiretroviral drugs. "We treat those who come to us with the appropriate diagnoses," Tsvetkov said. "The number right now is sixteen. I know that it will change soon and that we'll need money from the government. But in the last two years the number of infections has gone down." He shrugged. "It's meant that it has been hard to get money from the central government. There is a feeling in many places that the problem is going away. We know very well that is not true." He said he was aware that Irkutsk was gaining a reputation as a center of the AIDS epidemic in Russia. He was not pleased. "We do acknowledge the problem," he went on. "Still, we are experiencing nothing more and nothing less than what the rest of the country experiences. It's not easy now, and it's only going to get harder. In two or three years, I know, it will take our entire health budget just to treat people for H.I.V. And when that happens I am not sure, really, what we are going to do."

The man who for decades has paid the closest attention to the Russian population crisis is not even Russian; his name is Murray Feshbach, and he works in Washington, D.C. Feshbach, a scholar of Russia, statistics, and lies, started telling people in the nineteen-seventies that the Soviet Union was so frail that it was in danger of falling apart. Nobody wanted to listen. The Soviets lied about health statistics, and during the Cold War few American leaders were willing to believe that their



"I won't, of course, Hollingsworth, but I could have you killed."

“I was in a different place then.”

mighty adversary in the great battle for ideological and physical supremacy could actually be sickly and weak. But Feshbach—first while working for the U.S. Census Bureau, then as a professor at Georgetown University, and now as a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center—has spent his life plowing through obscure data in otherwise unread files. He has never wavered from his view that disease and the effects of environmental poisons are the biggest threats that Russia faces. His books—“Ecocide in the U.S.S.R.,” about the horrendous environmental damage done by the Soviets, and a recent volume on Russia’s demographic crisis—are impossibly grim. Eventually, though, American leaders, and then many of the Russians who had once mocked him, began to admit that Feshbach was right.

I went to see him one day not long ago, just a week before he was scheduled to fly to St. Petersburg, where he was to receive an award for his work. Feshbach is a heavy man with thick glasses who looks like an owl and seems to possess a copy of every number or population statistic that exists. His workspace at the Wilson Center was strewn with arcane monographs, charts, and books like “Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues,” “Pathologies of Power,” and “The Wellbeing of Nations.” There were stacks of data sitting on his desk and a pile of the articles and studies that he was most interested in at the moment; they ranged from the demographics of Bulgaria to the economic impact of sexually transmitted diseases in Central Asia.

“What do you think it’s going to take before Russia starts to respond to AIDS seriously?” he asked me, then quickly answered his own question. “More deaths. Many more deaths. Not enough have died yet.” He began to recite statistics. “The demographic is moving, it’s moving right now,” he said, meaning that the epidemic was switching from one primarily among drug users to one with a significant base in the wider population. “You can see it in pregnant women. As officially recorded, the number of infected children born to women who were not drug users is seventy-five hundred. But seventy-five per cent of them were born in the past two years.” The military will be hit particularly hard. Although the Russian government has said that it intends to maintain armed forces of a million men for many more years, it is unlikely to succeed. After 2005, the number of seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds eligible for military duty will decline sharply, the result of the baby bust of the late nineteen-eighties and early nineties. Soldiers are at much higher risk for H.I.V. than other members of society: young men are prone to risky sexual behavior, often relying upon prostitutes during long tours of duty away from home, and drug use is common. In 2002, only eleven per cent of the men called to serve were considered fit for duty; five thousand draftees tested positive for H.I.V. and were turned away. In fact, in the past five years the number of draftees with H.I.V. has increased twenty-five-fold. Last year, a quarter of those who entered the armed services during the spring draft had less than nine years of education, which means that they could not be trained to use the advanced equipment that is central to the success of a modern army.

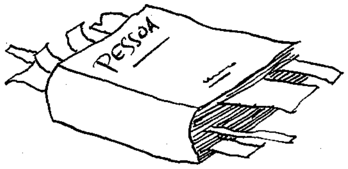
“The military is a complete disaster area—*prosto koshmar*,” Feshbach said, using the Russian words that mean “simply a nightmare.” Russian defense planners have even floated the idea of creating a foreign legion for Russia. In the coming decade, it may be the only way to maintain the Army. “The situation is awful, horrendous, terrifying—any word you want to use,” Feshbach said. “Russia badly wants a modern military, but you have to have a certain skill level to do something more than just run and stop and shoot. And when there are fewer soldiers what will the generals rely on?” Shaking his head, he answered the question. “Nuclear weapons, biological weapons, and chemical weapons,” he said. “That is what scares me the most. Russia has a view of itself as a superpower, and this is the only way it can support that view. The country can only become more unstable as it becomes sicker, but its leaders cling to their view of Russia as it existed when there was a Soviet Union. They want to be compared with us, not with Ghana. AIDS will not permit them to do that much longer. This epidemic will alter the way families are formed, and change the labor force completely, not to mention the way cities are built and populated." Feshbach added, "It's going to be an epochal reshaping of that part of the world."

As the number of people in the working population shrinks, so, naturally, will the gross domestic product. Russia may lose as much as eight per cent of its annual income, but experience from other countries demonstrates that the repercussions from H.I.V. are far larger than what one would expect simply by subtracting the money earned by those who are sick. People have to be fed, clothed, and taken care of, and that hurts productivity as well. If your best friend is dying of H.I.V., you are less likely to concentrate at the workplace and less likely to volunteer for the night shift, and, more than that, if your son or mother is dying you don't go to work at all. AIDS also changes the way a society thinks. In most countries, the principle of saving is easy to understand: if you put money aside today, somebody will use that money to produce shoes or a computer or to build a house tomorrow. In Russia, people will die too soon to take advantage of any of that, so they are not likely to consider investment or saving for the future to be worth the effort. In countries where AIDS has taken a large toll, people quickly learn to consume what they have. The savings rate plummets, and the economy suffers badly.

"I think Russia will get desperate," Feshbach said. "People will eventually see where they are going, and they will get desperate. There are people who say Russia will die. I don't know. But it will be weak and unstable. How can it not? Right now, the state is doing nothing, and if the state doesn't address this basic problem what does it address? I have heard every excuse for the lack of initiative: fate, that the Russians don't care if they live or die, that they don't understand life, that AIDS is too much of a stigma. I have heard that it's just about these promiscuous people, that it's bad stuff coming from the West, that it's the wrong crowd." He concluded, "Who cares what the reason is? Who cares? What is happening in Russia right now is going to define, to a large degree, the future of the AIDS epidemic globally. Yes, the country escaped for twenty years, but now it is confronted with possibly a disaster. And the impact, the size of the population, and the geography mean that it will have a direct influence on what will happen in Europe, in Central Asia, even in China and India. And that will have an impact on us. It's hard to imagine a more critical country at a more critical moment."

How many fact-finding tours of southern Africa, of India, and of various countries in Eastern Europe will Russian officials take before they see the implications of the epidemic that is now spreading rapidly within their borders? Why does Brazil, with a comparable population and a slightly lower per-capita income, spend nearly a billion dollars on AIDS each year when Russia doesn't spend even a tenth that? It can't be poverty; Russia is not rich, but it has eighty-five billion dollars in its financial reserves. The Kremlin is certainly capable of spending money when it wants to: last year, for example, the lavish three-hundredth-birthday party for the city of St. Petersburg—Vladimir Putin's home town—cost $1.3 billion. There are more billionaires in Russia today than in any other country—at times, they seem to be buying everything that is not nailed to the ground, from yachts and British soccer clubs to Malcolm Forbes's collection of Fabergé eggs. "Do you think for one minute that if Putin called these people into a room and said we have a crisis and we need to come up with some money for AIDS they would say no?" a senior international health official asked me. "Do you think that anyone in Russia can begin to justify spending just a few million dollars on AIDS each year? There are people there who spend that maintaining their private jets."

The Kremlin demands to be taken seriously as a world power and as an active member of the Group of Eight industrial nations. The country's leaders often mention AIDS in public at international gatherings, acting as if Russia still had an empire to control. At home, though, the story is different. "Russia went ahead and made a decision to contribute money to the Global Fund," Christof Rühl, who was until recently the World Bank's chief economist in Russia, told me. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS was set up by the U.N. to provide money for those countries which cannot on their own defeat AIDS, tuberculosis, or malaria. I talked to Rühl one day when I was in Moscow. He was taking a break from a conference on Western investment, held at the Radisson SAS Slavyanskaya Hotel. Men in Valentino suits were talking on cell phones and smoking huge cigars. Their drivers and bodyguards, all clad in thick black leather, stood smoking cigarettes patiently by the coatroom.



Russia invested just over four million dollars in 2003 in its federal AIDS program, but it committed twenty million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS. Two years ago, the Kremlin's protracted negotiations effectively delayed a hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar loan offer by the World Bank on the ground that it did not wish to incur further foreign debt. "If you watch," Rühl said, "you will see the President and all the ministers and the economic advisers going out and saying to the world, with great pride, 'Russia is a donor country. We are one of you. We are going to help solve this health crisis for these poor nations.' It is cheap and cynical. It has not been about H.I.V. at all. It was to say, 'We are a country that helps; we don't need handouts, like Africa.' But the truth is that the government is so disorganized and so removed from the needs of its own people that it could not even help get one application filed for the first round of this Global Fund.

"The people just don't care. On a very broad scale, it's a country where people care about their family and their friends. Their clan. But not their society. Yet they have this attitude that we are a great power. A donor nation. What does that really mean? It means you pay a few million dollars to the world AIDS fund even though you are too stupid to attempt to profit from it when your own citizens are dying." ◆

ANNALS OF MARKETING

THE SIMPLE LIFE, INC.

How MaryJane Butters reinvented the farmgirl.

BY DANA GOODYEAR

MaryJane Butters lives at the end of a long dirt road in the black-soil region of northern Idaho. The road, which she named Wild Iris Lane, passes through wheat fields that are spread like a green duvet and buzzed by crop dusters, and the wooden sign for MaryJanesFarm is gaily painted in Butters's thematic colors—buttermilk yellow, barn red, and forest green. The same colors beautify the goat barn and the outhouse, which until two years ago was the only toilet among the collection of small assorted buildings on the fifty-acre farm. Butters manufactures a line of some sixty mail-order instant and quick-prep organic foods, and the farm serves as her assembly plant. Attempts to raise and process organic legumes and grains have been expensive and disappointing, and so, aside from a few herbs, she doesn't actually grow the ingredients herself. But, still, she says, "It was always my dream to be a farmer. I think of myself as a food scientist and a farmer and a good cook and an advocate of farmers. I'm really proud to call myself a farmer. I think I've earned it. I love that I'm a woman farmer, and an *organic* woman farmer."

Butters is a farmer in the same way that Martha Stewart is a housewife. One of her favorite books is "The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing." Another is "The Fall of Advertising & the Rise of PR." Five years ago, she started *MaryJanesFarm*, an aspirational country-life magazine filled with autobiographical snippets and photographs of the farm, to sell her packaged foods and a line of rural-made goods. It now has a circulation of some sixty thousand and is available in ten thousand grocery stores and bookstores; she plans to print a hundred thousand copies of her next issue, which comes out in November. "I branded myself so people would ask, 'Who is this MaryJane?'" she says. "It creates a forum for me to talk about farming." So far, the most immediate and tangible dividend of her branding has been a $1.35-million deal she signed with Clarkson Potter last fall for a series of books about life on the farm, the first of which, "MaryJane's Ideabook, Cookbook, Lifebook," will come out next summer.

Butters wants to "put a face to food," and on her packaging that face belongs to a smiling blue-eyed gal in Western gear, adapted from a nineteen-forties label she found at a thrift store in Oregon. Butters herself is fifty-one and petite, with long ash-blond hair that sometimes hangs in a braid all the way down her back and sometimes is swept into a wispy bun and pinned at the crown of her head. She has periwinkle-blue eyes and a heart-shaped face, and favors Capri pants, hand-stitched pastel-colored hostess aprons, and round-toed Mary Janes with eyelet appliqué and wooden soles. To describe her aesthetic, which involves the liberal use of doilies and clothespins, dropped "g"s, and anything Amish, she invented the term "farmgirl"—as in "Farmgirl is a condition of the heart." It's an expression that, she has found, is inclusive enough to stimulate the longings of both urban apartment dwellers who buy *MaryJanesFarm* at Whole Foods and rural women who buy it at Wal-Mart.

Before her book advance, Butters had been scraping by—a few years ago, she and her husband, Nick Ogle, had a combined income of eighteen thousand dollars, and were forced to lay off several employees—but now she has more than quadrupled her staff, to eighteen. She has hired another designer for the magazine, a girl Friday, and a recipe tester and food stylist. In the spring, she brought on a woman to do research and development, special events, and merchandising. More recently, Butters hired two seasonal farmhands, Austin Goodman and Erik Jacobson, to help maintain the gardens, where she grows spinach, arugula, basil, carrots, sunflowers, strawberries, asparagus, rhubarb, squash, shallots, irises, gladiolus, zinnias, peonies, lilies, sunchokes, lovage, cherries, walnuts, and Asian pears, along with her prize crop, a field of sinuous, pale-green heirloom garlic plants. For the time being, Butters is too engrossed in writing the book and taking photographs to spend much time in the garden—"me, physically, out there hoeing."

Goodman and Jacobson are both trained photographers, and often find themselves shooting the produce with one of Butters's two new digital cameras, one for still photography and one for B-roll, in the likely event that she decides to do a television show or a series of how-to DVDs. In any case, jobs at the farm are fluid. Butters doesn't hesitate to assign a graphic designer to clean the chicken coop—she thinks of it as farmgirl training—or to ask a farmhand to wallpaper it with an old-fashioned nosegay pattern, to please the visiting editors of *House & Garden*. "So much here is about presentation and making it look beautiful," Goodman says. "So much of what she's doing is geared toward people's *ideas* of a farm." In the refrigerator of the test kitchen, eggs and vegetables often have signs posted on them saying "Photo Shoot—Do Not Eat."

One evening in early July, Butters's twenty-four-year-old daughter, Megan, arrived from Spokane with her fiancé, Lucas, and a U-Haul full of their possessions. They were moving to Kansas, where Lucas had been offered a job as a college basketball coach. Megan and her brother Emil, who is twenty and works as a mechanic in nearby Moscow, grew up on the farm, and Butters thinks they will both end up living there someday. She expects Megan to take over her business: "You know how Dear Abby kind of gave her column to her daughter? Like that." When Butters married Ogle, in 1993, he and his two sons, who are now in their twenties, stayed in their own house—a

Everything on Butters's farm is potential fodder for her publishing ventures. Photograph by Ruven Afanador.

flaking white clapboard farmhouse down the road which, as Butters says, "is in serious need of some T.L.C."—and Butters and her kids stayed in theirs. "It gets toxic to sleep together every night," Butters says. "We work together on the farm every day." In more playful moods, she says, "It keeps the romance."

Butters told her kids and employees to meet in the plum pit, an open-air living room surrounded by a grove of plum trees, where she has two luxuriously bedecked beds shrouded with mosquito netting, an antique white propane stove, and some homemade camp stools arranged around a fire. (There are plastic tarps on hand, in case of rain.) She thought of the gathering as simultaneously "Meg's last night at the farm"; an opportunity to shoot a picture of happy people eating hobo dinners, for the camping chapter of the book; and a chance to test a corn-on-the-cob recipe she was working on, using bundles of rosemary for basting brushes. At dusk, she started a fire and arranged a jar of lemons, some diced green apples, little balls of ground beef from an isolated organic herd, elk sausage, zucchini, and a cannister of carrots that had just been harvested from the garden. She scratched a match on a stone to light a pair of kerosene lamps—she had given the chore to someone else, who had done it wrong, allowing smoke to darken the lanterns' globes and potentially ruining the shot—and instructed Julie Bell, the food stylist, to cut lengths of aluminum foil to wrap around each person's dinner before sticking it in the fire. "She feeds the idea, and I fluff it," Bell said. Butters dispatched two helpers to cut willow switches to use for s'mores, and told an assistant who was wearing a MaryJanesFarm T-shirt to cover it up with a jean jacket. "That's just shameless advertising," she said.

Butters looked through her camera, which was mounted on a tripod near the fire where the corn was grilling. She took several pictures, then stepped away and raked up some bruised peony blossoms that she'd scattered around earlier. "I thought they looked cool," she said tensely. "But they don't look cool in a photograph." The sky grew dark, and Jacobson wheeled in a big construction lamp. Then, because Butters kept saying the pictures were "too hot" and dousing the fire with water, he and another employee held a piece of white gauze over the lamp. "Mom's working, *always* working," Emil teased. Butters rolled her eyes at him. At some point, he and Megan and Lucas wandered away. It was ten o'clock before Bell said, "We need to get some of these things on the grill, MaryJane!"

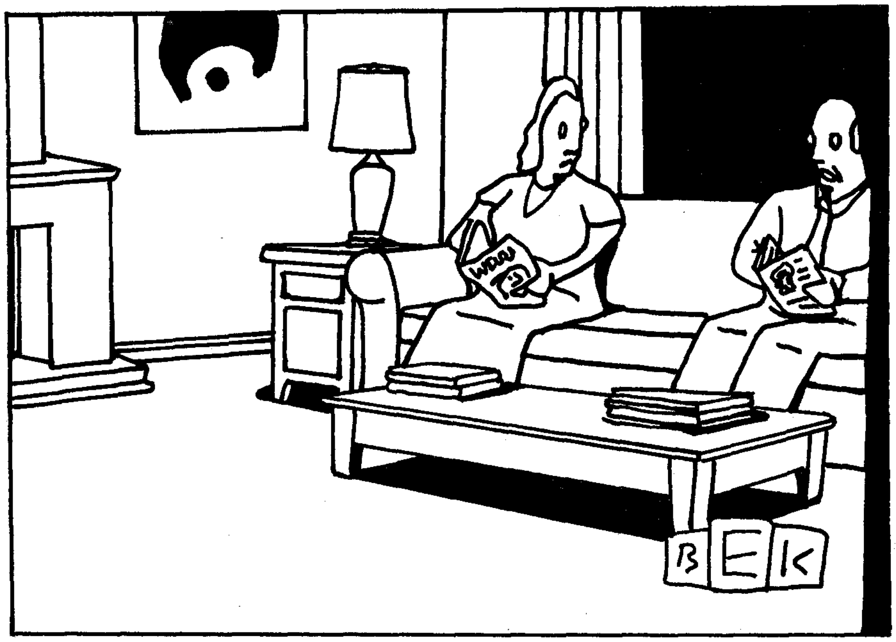
"Remember, this is more about the photograph than eating—sorry," Butters said. She walked swiftly to the nearby design studio, where the magazine is produced, and looked at a few dozen pictures of the blackening corn on the computer screen.

Eventually, the kids returned to the plum pit with Ogle. They had been drinking beer and playing horseshoes in the garden. Ogle is solid and sandy-haired, with blue eyes and a perpetual sunburn. He was wearing a Hawaiian shirt, shorts, and a panama hat. "This is like a photo-fest over here," he said, and grazed on the raw ingredients. He started to assemble a dinner, and everyone but Butters and Jacobson followed suit; they were at the stove, where she was trying to get a picture of the finished corn, and he was holding a mirror to catch highlights. In the end, she didn't get the group shot she had wanted, because, although she had asked everyone not to eat until she was ready, no one had listened. When she disappeared into the studio again, Megan advised anyone who wanted a s'more to make one quickly, before her mom got back. Only two people dared, and the vintage picnic hamper filled with organic chocolate chips, organic graham crackers, and Bell's homemade marshmallows was returned to the test kitchen, for a later shoot.

Ogle, a taciturn sort who was brought up on the conventional farm that adjoins Butters's property, has watched with equanimity as the land has been transformed from a homestead into a stage set. "You know, it's all a work in progress," he says. "She's always been like that."

THREE HYSTERICALLY BLIND MICE
I saw my mother get eaten by a cat!
I saw my sister get carried off by an owl!
I saw my best friend get caught in a trap, and ever since then - NOTHING!

Mary Jane Butters became MaryJane three years ago, because "I couldn't brand Mary-space-Jane—the shoes and the candies had been around forever." Besides, she says, the no-space, no-apostrophe style of MaryJanesFarm was perfect for the Internet. Butters grew up Mormon in a modest house "on the wrong side of the tracks," in Ogden, Utah, with a two-year supply of food in the basement. Pictures of her happy, flaxen-haired younger self and her four happy, flaxen-haired siblings appear in every issue of the magazine. One picture of Butters, as a child of about five, wearing—what else?—Mary Janes, and sitting in a crate full of baby chicks, was on the cover of her première issue (now out of print and circulating among enthusiastic readers), and adorns a MaryJanesFarm stitching kit, which is also sold separately as a purse. She camped and fished; she helped her father, who worked for forty-some years at the American Can Company, in his garden, and her mother with preserves. They were "downwinders," in the era of aboveground nuclear testing, and Butters, who was diagnosed with a thyroid condition as a girl, remembers that sometimes when it rained the puddles would be hot. "We were drinking strontium 90 in our milk every day," she says.



"What happened to that tiny little ounce of passion we used to have?"

When she graduated from high school, in 1971, she got a job as a secretary. She married her high-school boyfriend and was going to help put him through medical school, but was determined to avoid the situation her mother, however contentedly, had always been in: having a man provide for her. The following summer, Butters and her husband worked for the Forest Service in northern Idaho; her post was on a lookout tower, his on a timber-thinning crew. They didn't see much of each other. She read everything by Henry David Thoreau, and by the end of the summer she had decided that she wanted to have the marriage annulled.

Butters got a scholarship to the state university in Logan, Utah, and started dating a student from Chappaqua, New York. She discovered Karl Marx, and questioned the Vietnam War and the treatment of women in the Mormon Church, though she insists she didn't "hook up with a peer group that was into hairy armpits." That summer, she was hired by the Forest Service to be a wilderness ranger, and spent three months alone in the woods, twenty miles from the nearest road. (She was among the first women chosen to be rangers.) After a couple of years, she dropped out of college and enrolled in a carpentry trade school, and, in the summer of 1975, she was offered a job as the station guard at the Moose Creek ranger station, in the Selway-Bitterroot Range, on the Idaho-Montana border, one of the largest and most remote wilderness areas in the lower forty-eight. The young man from Chappaqua wanted to go with her, so she married him in his parents' living room before a justice of the peace.

At Moose Creek, Butters learned how to fell trees using hand tools. "I was this rough-and-ready woman," she says. "I was living in cabins and wearing men's clothing." She felt that she was missing something, though. "I had a dream one night that I went to this old house in the woods where these two spinster sisters had lived and died. They had left it for me to live in, and it was full of quilts and aprons and everything." She took it as a sign, and, at twenty-seven, found a job in a slightly less remote place—a ranch four hours up the Snake River, which was accessible only by boat. She brought her husband and a treadle sewing machine, planted a garden, worked as a milkmaid, and got pregnant with Megan. The primitive life did not agree with her husband, but after Emil was born, in 1983, Butters insisted that they buy the farm near Moscow. Its last occupants had been a gang of Hells Angels, who had left the outhouse overflowing and a pile of beer cans on the porch. There was no heat and no plumbing, and, before a year was up, her husband left. In her early thirties and the single mother of two young children, Butters chopped all the wood herself and washed the family's clothes in a wringer washer—a litany of hardships that are now among her fondest memories. She grew vegetables and sold them at the farmers' market, got a job as a construction worker, and, after the Chernobyl disaster, became an environmental activist. At an anti-pesticide meeting, she met a farmer who was growing a variety of garbanzo bean that required few chemicals. She says, "I went, Aha! Organic. It seems like I've always been that way, just questioning any of that—toxic politics, toxic old Mormon men." But, mostly, the food business was a way to stay home with her kids. She converted an extra room of her house into a packaging plant, designed some black-and-white labels on her computer, and started sending out samples of her homemade falafel mix and dehydrated lentils to co-ops and health-food stores.

In business, as in life, Butters's preferred mode of dispensing with enemies or obstacles is to "kill them with kindness," and she has often displayed a sort of cunning innocence. She writes to executives at rival companies and asks for guidance: "I like to call 'em up and say, 'Let's all be catalysts, let's be a success team.' We need everyone to be working to advocate organic." She thinks nothing of appealing to strangers for cash. In the early nineties, she wrote to Yvon Chouinard, the founder of the outdoor gear and clothing company Patagonia, enclosing a packet of her lentil soup and a letter asking to borrow thirty-five thousand dollars. He lent her the money, and became one of her most trusted advisers. Chouinard, who started as a manufacturer of climbing equipment and began making clothing only to support the original business, thinks Butters is very shrewd to have extended her brand to print and merchandise. But when he first met her, he said, "I was a little skeptical, because she's a little bit of a hippie, very idealistic, kind of uncompromising in a lot of ways. She was very naïve about business, basically building up her business with other people's money. I told her, 'You need to have a sense of responsibility to return these people's money.' "

In 1993, Butters incorporated as Paradise Farm Organics, and raised some capital through private-placement stock. When she needed cash again, in 1998, she decided to have what she calls a homegrown I.P.O.—she wrote the prospectus herself—and raised half a million more. She currently has sixty-two shareholders, mostly neighbors and friends in the Pacific Northwest, none of whom, she says, really expect to make any money from the venture. "You can sell hope and charge for it," she says. "That's what selling stock is." Her packaged food has typically grossed three or four hundred thousand dollars a year, but that has usually been just enough to cover expenses, and many years the business has run at a loss. Now that she has money to spend, Butters says, "I just sort of want it to run through my hands."

MaryJanesFarm, which Butters first published in 1999, has been her most effective vehicle of persuasion yet. She sent copies to Nell Newman, Paul Newman's daughter and the co-founder and president of Newman's Own Organics, and to Lois Weisberg, Chicago's commissioner of cultural affairs. The magazine is billed as "ad-free," though Butters allows that it is really "one big ad." In it, she introduces her farm crew and publishes regular features such as "Home Safe Home," a scrapbook of alarming items about the hazards of printed toilet paper and paint, and "Every Woman Has a Story," where she profiles her rural neighbors and customers. The look is glossy, but the vision is decidedly backward, with articles extolling the pleasures of using washboards and making rope by hand. Butters applauds feats of "re-purposing," and once ran a spread on unusually shaped vegetables that could be fashioned into children's toys. The list of Essential Accessories for farmgirl style grows longer every issue: custom-made fancy hats, crocheted clothes hangers, zip-up Dansko work boots like the ones worn by MaryJane. For $58.80, beginning knitters can buy a Knitted Care Wrap kit, which includes natural cotton yarn and instructions for making bandages and sending them, via the Mormon Church, to victims of leprosy.

Butters still prefers chopping wood to any other form of exercise, but feminism—the movement that she says allowed her to live differently from the way all the women in her family had lived before—now seems myopic to her. "We thought we had to throw out all the domestic things that we love," she says. "We had to go out and be a man. That has left us depleted and missing our center."

A few years ago, Faith Popcorn, the trend forecaster, wrote to Butters, congratulating her on a "good job cocooning," and has since asked her to join the board of her think tank. Pamela Krauss, the editorial director at Clarkson Potter, sees a potential market in women in their thirties and early forties who never took home economics and don't know much about canning or cooking or sewing or planting a garden. "That generation of women is really responding to MaryJane, because they don't have those basic skills, and there is something deeply satisfying to being self-sufficient on that level," Krauss says. "There is a very large population of people who are at the point in their lives when they're changing careers, or maybe they were stay-at-home moms and their kids are in school and they're looking for something else to define their lives."

Butters, a natural teacher, has a gift for simplification, and makes it seem that everything she does is easy and attainable. Assured before a camera, she effortlessly slips into anecdotes about her Forest Service days while demonstrating how to sharpen a hoe with a handheld file. On her Web site, she has created a community modelled on the neighborliness and fellow-feeling she remembers from her Mormon childhood. In the "Farmgirl Connection" chat rooms, women with handles such as Farmgirl at Heart and JourneyWoman lend advice about comfrey poultices and homesteading, and share farmgirl resources: "These bra stories are great fun! and informative!"; "I like to purl more than knit, too"; "Does anyone know where I can get some mushroom compost?"

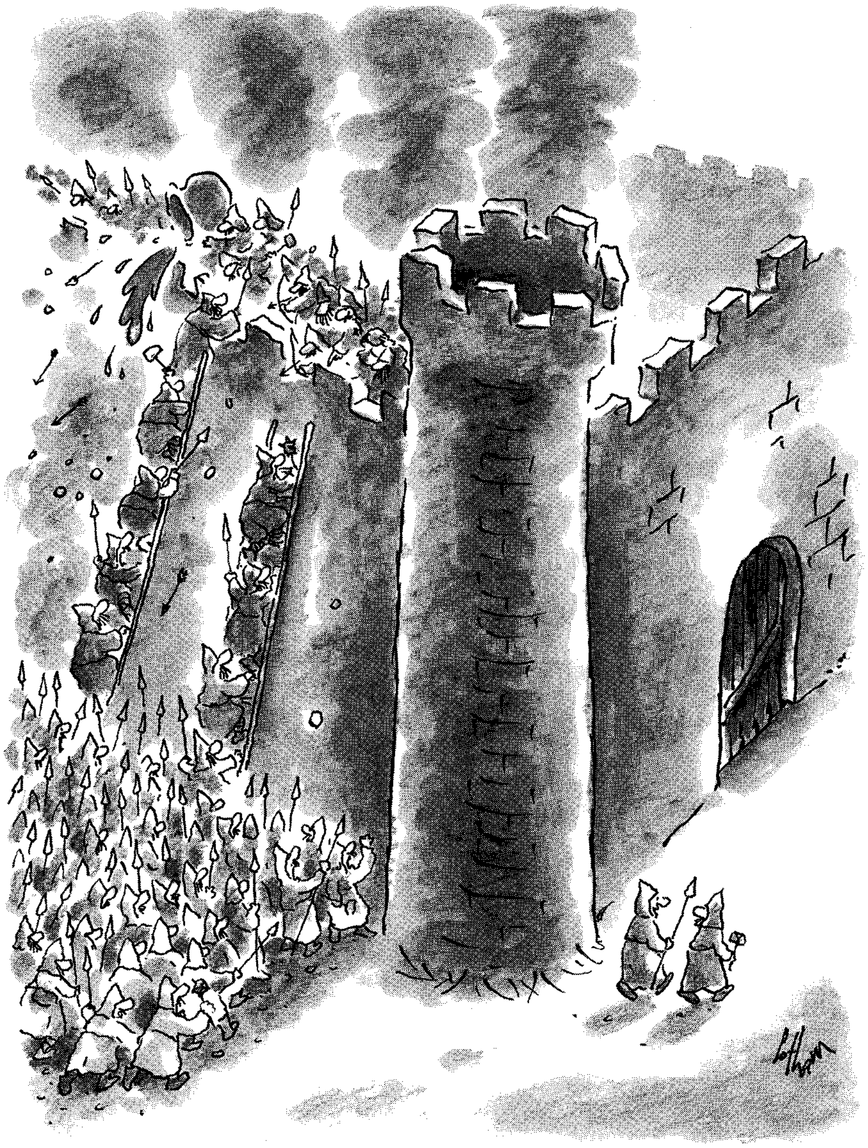
Butters, who subscribes to forty-six magazines—from *E* to *O*—is highly suggestible, and much of what she reads ends up in the magazine's "Newsroom" section. In sorting out exactly who she is and what she represents, Butters remains undaunted by contradictions. "I'm almost on the verge of saying, 'My brand stands for TV-free,' " she will announce, explaining that she has declined offers to do cooking shows and never returned a call from the Fox television personality Ryan Seacrest. A few hours later, though, she'll produce from her files a typed-up television pitch that proclaims: "Butters is poised to become what Suze Orman is to finance, what Deepak Chopra is to mental wellness, and what Ken Burns is to history." To her readers, she presents herself as well meaning and imperfect—deeply capable, frankly ambitious, and subject to revision.

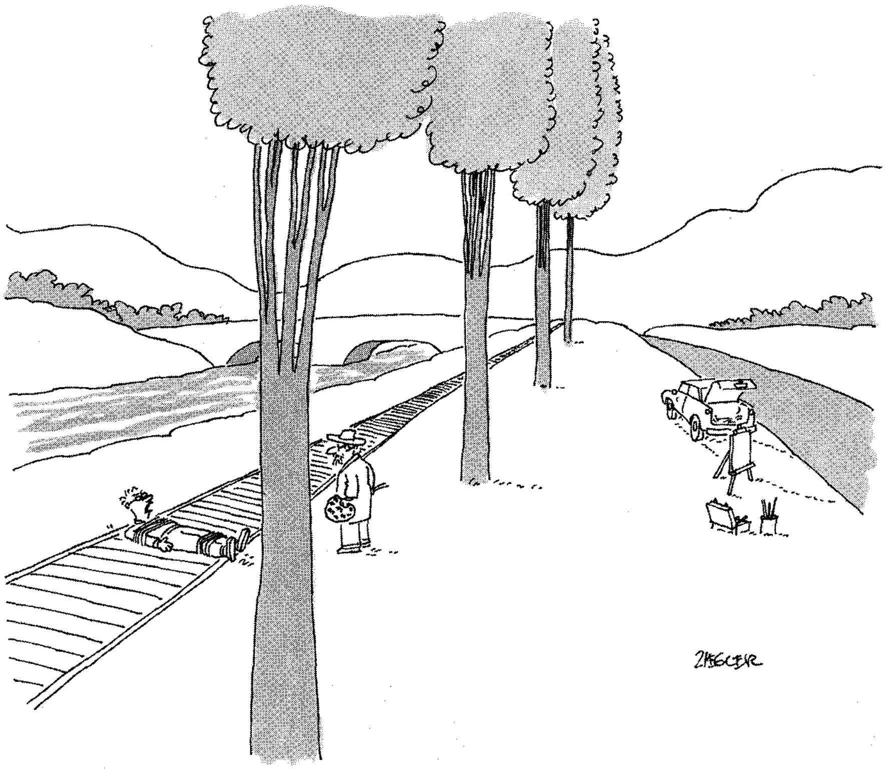
The farm reflects Butters's restlessness and changes with her fortunes. There is a smokehouse, a woodshed, a root cellar, a wood shop, and a converted barn that houses a library and a loft, where Butters sleeps. (The original farmhouse burned down in 1996.) In August, she broke ground on an eleven-thousand-square-foot farmhouse, which will have a country store, a greenhouse, a sewing room, a dried-flower room, and a bed-and-breakfast. She says her aim is to celebrate the skills of rural people and the household crafts of women and to restore the dignity of the family farm: "I'm going to create the new face of agriculture." This spring, she put up five wall tents, permanent structures with wooden floors, wood-burning stoves, and feather beds, where people can go on "organic safaris," for as much as a hundred and seventy dollars a night. The price includes a breakfast of fresh eggs you gather yourself or Butters's packaged oatmeal, and allows you to pitch in with whatever farmwork interests you. She plans to build a forty-to-sixty-cow dairy and a new chicken coop, "a real elaborate, fancy one." She imagines renting the farm out for organic weddings—even funerals. When Ogle suggested they get Webcams at the farm, the first thing Butters said was "Well, then we really couldn't pee outdoors anymore!" The next was "Are other people doing it?"

The American organic movement began as a creature of the publishing industry. In the early nineteen-forties, J. I. Rodale, who had made a small fortune in electrical equipment, read about the compost experiments of the English botanist Sir Albert Howard. Rodale had had a lifelong interest in health and nutrition; as the son of a Lower East Side grocer, he had often been made to eat tinned meat from his father's shop, and blamed his bad eyesight and other health problems on an inadequate diet. Inspired by Howard's claims about the connection between soil health and human health, Rodale started the magazine *Organic Farming & Gardening*. By the nineteen-sixties, when the hippies decided to go back to the land, Rodale was considered a prophet, the publication had a circulation of more than half a million, and the agricultural research facility he established in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, was a place of pilgrimage. In 1971, Rodale suffered a heart attack on the Dick Cavett show and died; that same year, Alice Waters opened Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, which was soon another place of pilgrimage among people who could afford to be obsessed with sustainable, local, seasonal food. Maria Rodale, the granddaughter of J. I. and the founding editor of *Organic Style*, a new life-style and shopping magazine, says that Waters transformed organic culture from a "fascist health movement" into a pleasure.

Although organic food still represents less than two per cent of the American food sector, it is growing at a rate of twenty per cent a year, compared with two to five per cent for the over-all food market. Maria Rodale says that the renewed mass interest is the result of Waters's effect on gourmet sensibilities and the food scares (Alar apples, mad-cow disease) that started in the late eighties. But the growth of the organic market has made it irresistible to multinational corporations, and the sense of hope that was palpable in the late eighties and the nineties—that organic food could save the family farm—is souring. Marion Nestle, a professor of nutrition at New York University and the author of "Food Politics," says that, because people are willing to pay more for food labelled "organic," we now have "what is essentially a two-class system—this high-end, expensive organic food and the mass-marketed other kind, which is much cheaper. The food companies that are publicly owned have to grow, and that forces them to try to figure out where they're going to expand, so they're all pushing into organics, because that's where the new money is."

In sixty years, though, no one has been able to prove that there is a nutritional benefit to eating organic food, and the movement, often fractious, continues to be a collection of loosely affiliated idealists and profiteers. In that spirit, Butters counts both J. I. Rodale, whose mission was health, and Waters, who intends to bring about social change through cooking, as heroes, and borrows as needed from their philosophies. With perhaps unintended irony, she calls a weeklong, three-thousand-dollar apprenticeship program she conducts "the Pay Dirt Farm School," in honor of Rodale's 1945 treatise on earthworms and compost. But Butters is not an experimental farmer


"Security is lax on this side."



"Damn it, man, do I look like I have any yellow ochre?"

(she has no patience for academics or research or test plots), an accomplished cook ("All I've ever had is maybe the 'Joy of Cooking' "), or a true practitioner of local, sustainable food production (her business, after all, is mail order); she is, like Martha Stewart, a marketer. "Martha broke incredibly important ground," Butters says. "She took what women do in their homes and gave it validity. She took domesticity and put it on a platter—a silver platter." For Butters, whose product is nineteen-fifties-style packaged food, closer in sensibility to Betty Crocker cake mix, the ideal audience is the Wal-Mart shopper. To reach such shoppers, at a time when organic food still costs thirty-five per cent more than conventionally grown food, she must knock organic from its specialty-food pedestal. "I think it's important to put organic food to the left of somebody and to the right of somebody, and it doesn't have to be a religious gourmet thing," she says.

The centerpiece of her campaign is an invention formerly known as the Tarte Tian™. In the fourth issue of the magazine, Butters described a moment when she was preparing the dish in Chicago in front of thirty-five people, including Oprah's chef, and realized "I'm not French." When she got home, she changed the name to BakeOver™. The BakeOver™ is an organic, do-it-yourself, one-skillet meal—skillet available in *MaryJanesFarm*, for $24 to $37, depending on the size, along with a special ovenproof handle that must be bought separately, for $9.50. The preparation is basic—"I swear to you, my food is truly elegant AND easy," Butters writes in the magazine—and amounts to sautéing fruits or vegetables in the skillet, making a crust by adding water and butter to any one of Butters's bread or brownie mixes, and baking the whole thing for twenty minutes. "I say to mainstream people who have never eaten organic and are overwhelmed by Whole Foods and the price, 'Here's how you can do organic,' " she says. "I teach them to go into the grocery store and go straight to the vegetables and then to the meat and dairy and avoid the whole middle section of the store." They will save money, she says, so long as they stock their pantries with her mixes, which cost around five dollars for a two-serving packet. That way, she tells people, "you're never going to not have an ingredient." It's also a time-saver. "For people who just don't have time, at least it's fast food that's good for you," she says.

The promotional copy for the Pay Dirt Farm School says that it is "one part culinary school," and the BakeOver™ is a mainstay of the curriculum. A few nights after Megan's farewell hobo dinner, three students—a loan officer from New Orleans who, with her husband, had just bought a farm fifty miles from the city; a single woman from Great Falls, Idaho; and a career counsellor from Osnabrück who is the German translator of the *Times* best-seller "Wishcraft: How to Get What You Really Want"—stood in rapt attention in the test kitchen as Butters described the principles. "This is recipe-free, this idea," she said. "You're going to be doing the same thing every night, but the versatility is far greater than pizza." She told them that night's version would be Thai, with frozen shrimp. "I looked in the freezer today and I had some frozen corn, so we'll throw that in," she said, and set the women to work chopping red bell peppers. Next she showed them how to make dough from her johnnycake mix and roll it out on a floured countertop. "You can be really informal with this," she said, shaping the dough into a precise circle by tracing around the bottom of a skillet with a knife. "I just had an extra pan here, so I made it all perfect." She stood at the stove, pigeon-toed, sautéing the peppers, the corn, and the shrimp in the skillet, and sprinkled in a little dried coconut milk and chili powder. After covering the mixture with dough, she put the skillet in the oven. Twenty minutes later, she flipped it onto a plate, and cut each of the apprentices a generous wedge of the heavy, sweet, quiche-like cake. "Gorgeous," the German woman said.

Butters encourages people to eat a BakeOver™ for every meal, as a main course and as dessert. She knows a couple in Moscow who eat nothing else. Not long ago, four "farm wives" came for a lunch tour, at thirty-five dollars a head. "One woman said, 'MaryJane, I am so hooked on your BakeOver™ idea. It's all I do anymore. I do it every night with whatever's in my crisper,' " Butters recalled. After learning that several of her employees were on the South Beach

Diet, she has started to think about a twenty-one-day meal plan based on the BakeOver™.

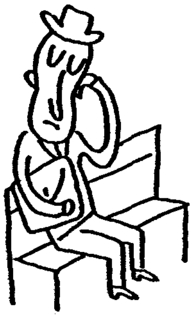
Butters's latest invention, which she will introduce in the book, is the ChillOver™, a Jell-O inspired dish that uses Japanese seaweed extract instead of the "ground-up animal hooves and things" that constitute gelatin. With the ChillOver™, she hopes to emulate Jell-O's success. "It was this worthless food, and then they did this marketing blitz and suddenly everybody's eating it every day," she said. She plans to "do a little box, just like Jell-O," and introduce a line of ChillOver™ molds: one in the shape of a chicken and another in the classic fluted style.

Butters herself doesn't often eat the packaged foods she sells. "I'm more of a salad person," she said. The foods can be more sophisticated and appealing than ordinary instant fare—the Organic Lebanese Peanut Bulghar is made with currants, curry, and sea salt; the Organic Ginger Sesame Pasta uses orange peel and soybean miso—but they tend to be high in calories and carbohydrates. Ogle's consumption of them, so regular that she named an instant mashed-potato dish Nick's Organic Couch Potatoes, causes her some concern. "I'm like, 'Nick, you've gotta eat a salad. You can't have mac-and-cheese three days in a row!' " Nonetheless, she is proud that her foods don't have "preservatives or fillers or weirdnesses." And the fact that even she equates her products with fast food is somewhat beside the point: Butters believes it's just better for you to eat food from a small farm, handled by someone you can call up on an 800 number—even if much of the food doesn't actually come from her farm, and she no longer has time to answer the phone.

Over the July 4th weekend, more than twelve hundred people came to the farm for the first Market Day, which Butters hopes to make a monthly event. Twelve venders, with names like Rustique and the Farm Chicks™ (Butters helped them to get trademarked), set up stalls of attractively deteriorated bedsteads and moldering quilts and last century's arithmetic primers in a four-thousand-square-foot white tent that had been erected at the far end of Butters's land. There was folk music, a recitation by a poet-farmer, a wool-spinning demonstration, and a strawberry-shortcake stand, where Julie Bell sold four hundred shortcakes and three hundred cookies, using sixty-six pounds of MaryJanesFarm organic buttermilk biscuit mix.

On the first morning, Butters hung a banner that said "FARM" in pale-blue letters, with the phrase "American Rural Made" superimposed in red, across the back of a 1963 white Ford truck with woven-hemp awnings, below which she had displayed some handmade Christmas stockings. Goodman, whose jobs for the day were trash collection and photography, was taking pictures of Butters as she secured the banner. "Could you work slower?" he asked. "Could you fuss with that again?" Butters's female employees wore farmgirl attire, with the aprons and the Mary Janes, and operated a booth where they sold straw Breton hats with black grosgrain ribbons, similar to one Butters has appeared in many times in her magazine. Next to the MaryJanesFarm booth was a blackboard that welcomed everyone and said, in small chalked letters, "Be sure to say hi to Nick!"

After excusing herself to put on her apron and gather her thoughts, Butters appeared in a fitted white cowgirl shirt with a red ribbon tied at the neck; a full red skirt with a pattern of leaping horses, covered by a diaphanous black apron; and chunky white earrings from an estate sale. Her hair was in a bun, and she was wearing pink lipstick. Meeting visitors on the road down to the tent—people on their way to pick their own scapes and berries, or those wanting to see the plum pit, a good number of them now wearing Breton hats—she said graciously, "And who are you? And how did you hear about us? Do you have a farm?" She urged them to have some strawberry shortcake, which was going to pay for the whole event, since it had been marked up fourfold, to four dollars. At the tent, she signed magazines. She picked up children so that their parents could take her picture with them, and posed in her 1981 Mercedes, which, the day before, Emil had finished painting the color of her fingernails, O.K. Coral. The car will be run on biodiesel, a sustainable fuel made from mustard seed grown on the farm, and on the doors Emil had stencilled "Powered by home-grown fuel. MaryJanesFarm" in an elegant font chosen by one of the designers.



"People were doin' the whole celebrity thing," Butters said afterward. "It feels funny, but I guess I have to get used to it for when I go on book tour." She said she was exhilarated, and very happy with the kinds of people who showed up—like the ladies from Oakesdale, Washington, about an hour away, who are planning to make a MaryJane doll, with earrings and a bun, and overalls and work boots and nineteen-fifties clothing. ("You know, the woman who made American Girl never even did an ad on TV, and she sold to Mattel for seven hundred million dollars," Butters said. "So people like dolls.") She was pleased that they were "rural people, mainstream people," she said. "And there were some real farmers, who said, 'What are you doing with that mustard seed?' " She told them about a grant she'd received from the state of Idaho that paid for a twenty-thousand-dollar oil press; she was going to mount it on a trailer and bring it to their farms so that they, too, could make their own fuel. "I know that they've been fed the wrong food and the wrong information, and I want to approach them slowly, come to them where they are," Butters said later. "I want them to feel safe, and then I can plug certain things."

Butters knows that the projection of security and rootedness and domestic harmony will always be her farm's most important asset. She saw that again on Market Day. "People wanted to go to a farm, reconnect with that, see what a farm does, what a farm is," she said. "The U-Pick thing was a hit, the music, being outside in a beautiful setting, the hay bales in the field. Totally like Disneyland reinvented. It was a whole family event—even old people were here! So I really see it now. My vision's very clear. This is a farm. This is agritourism. People want to experience a farm, even for a day like this." She now has utter confidence that she is onto something big. "After this weekend," she said, "I definitely think this is a farm." ♦

FICTION

THE SCHEME OF THINGS

BY CHARLES D'AMBROSIO

Lance vanished behind the white door of the men's room and when he came out a few minutes later he was utterly changed. Gone was the tangled nest of thinning black hair, gone was the shadow of beard, gone, too, was the grime on his hands, the crescents of black beneath his blunt, chewed nails. Shaving had sharpened the lines of his jaw and revealed the face of a younger man. His shirt was tucked neatly into his trousers and buttoned up to his throat. He looked as clean and bland as an evangelist. He bowed to Kirsten with a stagy sweep of his hand and entered the gas station. All business, he returned immediately with the attendant in tow, a kid of sixteen, seventeen.

"This here's my wife, Kirsten," Lance said.

Kirsten smiled.

"Pleased," the kid said. He crawled under the chassis of the car and inspected the tailpipe.

"Your whole underside's rusted to hell," he said, standing up, wiping his hands clean of red dust. "I'm surprised you haven't fallen through."

"I don't know much about cars," Lance said.

"Well," the kid said, his face bright with expertise, "you should replace everything, right up to the manifold. It's a big job. It'll take a day, and it'll cost you."

"You can do it?" Kirsten asked.

"Sure," the kid said. "No problem."

Lance squinted at the oval patch above the boy's shirt pocket. "Randy," he said, "what's the least we can do?"

"My name's Bill," the kid said. "Randy's a guy used to work here."

"So, Bill, what's the least we can get away with?"

"Strap it up, I suppose. It'll probably hold until you get where you're going. Loud as hell, though."

The kid looked at Kirsten. His clear blue eyes lingered on her chest.

"We represent a charity." Lance handed the kid one of the printed pamphlets, watching his eyes skim back and forth as he took in the information. "Outside of immediate and necessary expenses, we don't have much money."

"Things are sure going to hell," the kid said. He shook his head, returning the pamphlet to Lance.

"Seems that way," Lance said.

The kid hurried into the station and brought back a coil of pipe strap. While he was under the car, Lance sat on the warm hood, listening to the wind rustle in the corn. Brown clouds of soil rose from the fields and gave the air a sepia tint. Harvest dust settled over the leaves of a few dying elms, over the windows of a cinder-block building, over the trailers in the courtyard across the street. One of the trailer doors swung open. Two Indians and a cowgirl climbed down the wooden steps. It was Halloween.

"You got a phone?" Lance asked.

"Inside," the kid said.

Lance looked down and saw the soles of the kid's work boots beneath the car, a patch of dirty sock visible through the hole widening in one of them. He walked away, into the station.

The kid hadn't charged them a cent, and they now sat at an intersection, trying to decide on a direction. The idle was rough. The car detonated like a bomb.

"Here's your gum," Lance said.

He emptied his front and back pockets and pulled the cuff of his pants up his leg and reached under the elastic band of his gym socks. Pink and green and blue and red packages of gum piled up in Kirsten's lap. He pulled a candy bar from his shirt pocket and began sucking away at the chocolate coating.

"One pack would've been fine," Kirsten said. "A gumball would have been fine."

"Land of plenty, sweetheart," he said.

Kirsten softened up a piece of pink gum and blew a large round bubble until it burst and the gum hung like flesh from her nose.

"Without money, we're just trying to open a can of beans with a cucumber," Lance said. "It doesn't matter how hungry we are, how desirous of those beans we are—without the right tools, those beans might as well be on the moon." Lance laughed to himself. "Moon beans," he said.

Kirsten got out of the car. The day was turning cold, turning to night. She leaned through the open window, smelling the warm air that was wafting unpleasantly with the mixed scent of chocolate and diesel.

"What's your gut feel?" Lance asked.

"I don't know, Lance."

She walked toward the intersection. Ghosts and witches crossed from house to house, holding paper sacks and pillowcases. The street lights sputtered nervously in the fading twilight. With the cold wind cutting through her T-shirt, Kirsten felt her nipples harden. She was small-breasted and sensitive and the clasp on her only bra had broken. She untucked the shirt and hunched her shoulders forward so that the nipples wouldn't show, but still the dark circles pressed against the white cotton. The casual clothes that Lance had bought her in Key Biscayne, Florida, had come to seem like a costume and were now especially flimsy and ridiculous here in Tiffin, Iowa.

A young girl crossed the road, and Kirsten followed her. She thought she might befriend the girl and take her home, a gambit, playing on the gratitude of the worried parents that Kirsten always imagined when she saw a child alone. The pavement gave way to gravel and the gravel to dirt, and finally a narrow path in the weeds dipped through a dragline ditch and vanished into a cornfield. The girl was gone. Kirsten waited at the edge of the field, listening to the wind, until she caught a glimpse of the little girl again, far down one of the rows, sitting and secretly eating candy from her sack.

"You'll spoil your dinner," Kirsten said.

The girl clutched the neck of her sack and shook her head. Entering the field felt to Kirsten like wading from shore and finding herself, with one fatal step, out to sea. She sat in the dirt, facing the girl. The corn rose over their heads and blew in waves, bending with the wind.

"Aren't you cold?" Kirsten said. "I'm cold."

"Are you a stranger?" the girl asked.

"What's a stranger?"

"Somebody that kills you."

"No, then, I'm not a stranger."

Kirsten picked a strand of silk that hung in the little girl's hair.

"I'm your friend," she said. "Why are you hiding?"

"I'm not hiding. I'm going home."

"Through this field?" Kirsten said.

"I know my way," the little girl said.

The girl was dressed in a calico frock

JENNY GAGE AND TOM BETTERTON/ART + COMMERCE ANTHOLOGY

and dirty pink pumps, but Kirsten wasn't quite sure it was a costume. A rim of red lipstick distorted the girl's mouth grotesquely, and blue moons of eyeshadow gave her face an unseeing vagueness.

"What are you supposed to be?" Kirsten asked.

The girl squeezed a caramel from its cellophane wrapper, and said, "A grownup."

"It's getting dark," Kirsten said. "You aren't scared?"

The little girl shrugged and chewed the caramel slowly. Juice dribbled down her chin.

"Let me take you back home."

"No," the girl said.

"You can't stay out here all by yourself."

The girl recoiled when Kirsten grabbed her hand. "Let me go," she screamed, her thin body jolting away. "Let me go!" The fury in her voice shocked Kirsten, and she felt the small fingers slip like feathers from her hand. When the girl ran off through the rows of corn, it was as if the wind had taken her away. Instantly, she was nowhere and everywhere. In every direction, the stalks swayed and the dry leaves turned as if the little girl, passing by, had just brushed against them.

When Kirsten finally found her way out of the field, she was in another part of town. She walked the length of the street, looking for signs, deciding at last on a two-story house in the middle of the block. A trike lay tipped over in the rutted grass, and a plastic pool of water held a scum of leaves. Clay pots with dead marigolds—woolly brown swabs on bent, withered stalks—lined the steps. A family of carved pumpkins sat on the porch rail, smiling toothy candle-lit grins that flickered to black, guttering in laughter with every gust of wind. On the porch, newspapers curled beside a milk crate. Warm yellow light lit the downstairs and a woman's shadow flitted across a steam-clouded kitchen window.

Kirsten heard a radio playing. She knocked on the door.

The woman answered. Her hair was knotted up on her head with a blue rubber band, a few fugitive strands dangling down over her ears, one graying wisp curling around her eye. A smudge of flour dusted her cheek.

"Yes?" the woman said.

"Evening, Ma'am." Kirsten handed the woman a flyer. "I'm with B.A.D.," she said. "Babies Addicted to Drugs. Are you busy?"

The woman switched on the porch light and held the printed flyer close to her face. Closing one eye, she studied the bold-red statistics on the front of the page and then flipped it over and looked into the face of the dark, shrivelled baby on the back.

"Doesn't hardly look human, does it?" Kirsten said.

"No, I can't say it does," the woman said.

"That's what's happening out there, Ma'am. That, and worse." Kirsten looked off down the road, east to where the town ended and the world opened up to cornfields and darkening sky. She thought of the little girl.

"Smells nice inside," Kirsten said.

"Cookies," the woman said.

"You mind if I come in?"

The woman looked quickly down the road and, seeing nothing there, said, "Sure. For a minute."

Kirsten sat in a Naugahyde recliner that had been angled to face the television. Across from her was a couch covered with a clear plastic sheet. The woman returned with a plate of cookies. She set them in front of Kirsten and slipped a coaster under a coffee cup full of milk.

"My partner and me have been assigned to the Midwest territory," Kirsten said. "I got into this when I was living in New Jersey and saw it all with my own eyes and couldn't stand by and do nothing. Those babies were just calling out to me for help."

"I've got three children myself," the woman said.

"That's what the cookies are for," Kirsten said. She bit into one and tasted the warm chocolate.

"Homemade," the woman said. "But the kids like store-bought. All they want is Wing Dings or what have you."

"They'll appreciate it later, Ma'am. I know they will. They'll remember it and love you."

In the low light, Kirsten again noticed the spectral smudge of flour on the woman's cheek—she had reached to touch herself in a still, private moment as she thought of something she couldn't quite recall, a doubt too weak to claim a place in the clamor of her day.

"That baby on the flyer isn't getting any homemade cookies. That baby was born addicted to drugs. There's women I've personally met who would do anything to get their drugs and don't care what all happens to their kids. There's babies getting pitched out windows and dumped in trash cans and born in public lavatories."

"Things are terrible, I'm sure, but I can't give you any money. I worked all day making the kids Halloween costumes—they want store-bought, of course, but they can't have them, not this year."

"What're they going to be?"

"Janie's a farmer, Randall's a ghost. Kenny's costume was the hardest. He's a devil with a cape and hood and a tail."

If she could coax five dollars out of this woman, Kirsten thought, she could buy a cheap bra out of a bin at the dime store. Her breasts ached. When she'd seen the trike on the lawn out front, she'd assumed that this woman would reach immediately for her pocketbook.

"With a ten-dollar donation, you get your choice of two magazine subscriptions, free of charge for a year." Kirsten showed the woman the list of magazines. "*Cosmo*," she said. "*Vogue, Redbook*, all them."

"I'm sorry," the woman said.

The front window washed with white light.

"You had better go." The woman stood up. "I don't have any use for your magazines."

On the porch, they met a man, his face darkened with the same brown dirt and dust that had rolled through and clouded the sky that day. Spikes of straw stabbed his hair and the pale-gray molt of a barn swallow clung to his plaid shirt. A silent look passed between the man and the woman, and Kirsten hurried away, down the steps.

"I thought she was trick-or-treating," the woman said as she shut the door.

"Nothing?" Lance said. "Nothing?" Kirsten tore the wrapping from another piece of gum. They had driven to the outskirts of town, where the light ended and the pavement gave way to gravel and the road, rutted like a washboard, snaked off toward a defile choked with cottonwoods. Every street out of

"Driftwood, deadwood—what the hell's the difference?"

town seemed to dead-end in farmland, and here a lighted combine swept back and forth over the field, rising and falling like a ship over high seas. The combine's engine roared as it moved past them, crushing a path through the dry corn.

"A man came home," Kirsten said.

"So?"

"So the lady got all nervous and said I had to go."

"Should've worked the man," Lance said. He ran his finger along the outline of her breasts, as if he were drawing a cartoon bust. "We've talked about that. A man'll give money just to be a man about things."

"I'm too skinny," Kirsten said.

"You're filling out, I've noticed. You're getting some shape to you."

Lance smiled his smile, a wide, white grin with a hole in the middle of it. Two of his teeth had fallen out, owing to a weakness for sweets. He worried his tongue in the empty space, slithering it in and out along the bare gum.

"I wish I had a fix right now," Kirsten said. She hugged herself to stop a chill radiating from her spine. The ghost of her habit trailed after her.

Again the voracious growling of the combine came near. Kirsten watched the golden kernels spray into the holding bin. A man sat up front in a glass booth, smoking a pipe, a yellow cap tilted back on his head.

"My cowboy brain's about dead," Lance said. "What do you think?"

Kirsten had died once, and had made the mistake, before she understood how superstitious he was, of telling Lance about it. Her heart had stopped and she had drifted toward a white light that rose away from her like a wind-blown sheet, hovering over what she recognized as her cluttered living room. She was placid, and smiling into the faces of people she had never seen before, people she realized instantly were relatives, aunts and uncles, cousins, the mother she had never known. Kirsten had grown up in foster care, but now this true mother reached toward her from within the source of light, her pale-pink hands fluttering like the wings of a bird. A sense of calm told Kirsten that this was the afterlife, where brand-new rules obtained. She woke in a Key Biscayne hospital, her foster mother in a metal chair beside the bed, two uniformed cops standing at the door, ready to read Kirsten her rights.

"Don't always ask me," Kirsten said.

"Just close your eyes, honey. Close 'em and tell me the first thing you see."

With her eyes closed, she saw the little girl, alone, running, lost in the corn.

"Let's get out of here," she said.

"That's what you saw?"

"Start the car, O.K.? I can't explain everything I see."

She had met him in Florida, in her second year of detention. Her special problem was heroin, his was methamphetamine. They lived in a compound of low pink cinder-block buildings situated maddeningly close to a thoroughfare with a strip of shops, out beyond a chain-link fence and a greenbelt. At night, neon lights lit up the swaying palm fronds and banana plants, fringing the tangled jungle with exotic highlights of pink and blue. They'd climbed the fence together, running through the greenbelt, disappearing into the fantastic jungle. A year passed in a blur of stupid jobs—for Lance, stints driving a cab, delivering flowers, and, for Kirsten, tearing movie tickets in half as a stream of happy dreamers clicked through the turnstiles, then sweeping debris from the floors in the dead-still hours when the decent world slept. Lance worked a second job deep-frying doughnuts in blackened vats of oil, dressed in a white suit.

But *this*, Lance had said, *this* would allow them to turn their backs on that year, on everything they'd done for survival. A regular at the doughnut shop had set them up with their kit—the picture ID, the magazine subscriptions, the pamphlets. Although the deal worked like a pyramid scheme, it wasn't entirely a scam; a thin layer of legality existed, and ten per cent of the money collected actually went to the babies. Another ten per cent was skimmed by collectors in the field and the remainder was mailed to a P.O. box in Key Biscayne. Of that, the recruiters took a percentage, and the recruiters of the recruiters took an even bigger cut. That's the way it was supposed to work, but when Lance and Kirsten left Florida the tenuous sense of obligation weakened and finally vanished, and Lance was no longer sending any money to the P.O. box. They were renegade now; they kept everything.

Lance got out of the car. He tried to break the dragging tailpipe free, but it wouldn't budge. He wiped his hands. Down the road the yellow lights of a farmhouse glowed like portals. A dog barked and the wind soughing through the corn called hoarsely.

"The worst they can do is say no," Lance said.

"They won't," Kirsten said.

Lance grabbed his ledger and a sheaf of pamphlets and his ID. They left the

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car and walked down the road in the milky light of a gibbous moon that lit the feathery edges of a high, isolated cloud. The house was white, and seemed illuminated, as did the ghostly white fence and the silver silo. When they opened the gate, the dog barked wildly and charged them, quickly using up its length of chain; its neck snapped and the barking stopped, and when the dog regained its feet it followed them in a semicircle, as if tracing a path drawn by a compass.

Before they could knock, an old woman answered with a bowl of candy. Her hair was thin and white, more the memory or suggestion of hair than the thing itself. Her eyes were blue and the lines of her creased face held the image of the land around her, worn and furrowed. Her housedress drifted vaguely around her body like a fog.

"Evening, Ma'am," Lance said.

When he was done delivering his introduction on the evils of drugs, he turned to Kirsten for her part, but she said nothing, letting the silence become a burden. The whole of the night—the last crickets chirring in the cold, the brown moths beating against the yellow light, the moon shadows and the quiet that came, faintly humming, from the land itself—pressed in close, weighing on the woman.

Finally, Kirsten said, "If you could give us a place to stay for the night, we'd be grateful."

Lance said, "Now, honey, we can't impose."

"I'm tired and I'm cold," Kirsten said.

Again the silence accumulated around them like a world filling with water.

"My husband's gone up to bed," the woman said at last. "I hate to wake Effie."

"No need," Kirsten said. "If we could just sleep tonight in your girl's room, we'll be gone in the morning."

"My girl?"

"That's a lovely picture she drew," Kirsten said, "and it's wonderful that you hang it in the living room. You must have loved her very much."

A quelling hand went to the woman's lips. She backed away from the door—not so much a welcome as a surrender, a ceding of the space—and Kirsten and Lance entered. Years of sunlight had slowly paled the wallpaper in the living room and drained the red from the plastic roses on the sill. A familiar path was padded into the carpet and a pair of suède slippers waited at their place by the sofa. The air in the house was warm and still and faintly stale like a held breath.

In the morning, Kirsten woke feeling queasy and sat up on the cramped child's mattress. She pulled aside the curtain. The old couple were in the back yard. The wife was hanging a load of wash on a line, socks, a bra, underwear, linens that unfurled like flags in the wind. The husband hoed weeds from a thinning garden of gaunt cornstalks, black-stemmed tomato plants, and a few last, lopsided pumpkins that sat sad-faced on the ground, saved from rot by a bedding of straw. A cane swung from a belt loop in his dungarees.

"Any dreams?" Lance said. He reached for Kirsten, squeezing her thigh.

"Who needs dreams?" Kirsten said, letting the curtain fall back.

"Bitter, bitter," Lance said. "Don't be bitter."

He picked his slacks off the floor and shook out the pockets, unfolding the crumpled bills and arranging the coins in separate stacks on his stomach.

"Let's see where we're at," he said.

Lance grabbed his notebook from the floor and thumbed the foxed, dirty pages in which he kept a meticulous tally of their finances.

"You don't need a pencil and paper," Kirsten said.

"Discipline is important," he said. "When we strike it rich, we don't want to be all stupid and clueless. Can you see them old folks out there?"

"They're out there."

"It must be something to live in a place like this," Lance said. He put down the notebook and peered out the window. "Just go out and get yourself some corn when you're hungry." He pressed his hand flat against the glass. In the field to the east, the corn had been gathered, the ground laid bare. "It looks weird out there."

Kirsten had noticed it also. "It looks like we're too late," she said.

"That's the whole problem with the seventies."

"It's 1989, Lance."

"Well, then, high time we do something about it." He pulled the curtain closed. "I'm sick and tired of washing my crotch in sinks."

"I'll go out and talk to them," Kirsten said.

"Where'd you go last night?" Lance said. "After the gas station."

She didn't want to say, and said, "Nowhere."

"Get a look at yourself in that mirror there," he said.

Kirsten sat in a child's chair, looking at herself in the mirror of a vanity that had also doubled as a desk at one time—beside the perfume bottles and a hairbrush and a box of costume jewelry were cups of crayons and pens and pencils and a yellowed writing tablet. Kirsten leaned her head to the side and began to brush her hair, combing the leaves and dirt out of it.

"Lance," she said.

"Yeah?"

"Don't take anything from these people."

"You can't hide anything from me," he said, with an assured, tolerant smile.

Kirsten set down the brush, and walked out into the yard, where the old woman was stretched on her toes, struggling to hang a last billowing sheet.

"Lend me a hand here," she said. "The wind's blowing so—"

Kirsten held an end and helped fasten the sheet. Blowing dust clung to the wet cotton.

"I probably shouldn't even bother hanging out the wash, this time of year," the old woman said. She pronounced it "warsh."

The combine's swallowing mouth opened a path along the fence. The old woman shuddered and turned away.

"You have a beautiful place," Kirsten said. "All this land yours?"

"We got two sections. Daddy's too old to work it now, so we lease everything to a commercial outfit in Kalona."

"You must eat a lot of corn."

"Oh, hon, that's not sweet corn. That corn's for hogs. It's feed."

"Oh," she said.

"That blue Rabbit up the road yours?" The old man walked with an injured stoop, punting himself forward with the cane. He introduced himself—Effie Bowen, Effie and his wife, Gen. He was short of breath and gritted his teeth as if biting the difficult air. A rime of salt stained the brim of his red cap.

"That's us, I'm sorry to say."

He tipped the hat back, bringing his eyes out of the shade.

"Momma thinks I can tow you with the tractor," he said. "I say she's right. I went and looked at it this morning."

"I'm not sure we can afford any major repairs," Kirsten said.

"You work for a children's charity," the old woman said.

"That's right."

"We'll get you going," the man said. "Up to the Mennonites, right, Momma?"

The old woman nodded. "I put towels out. You kids help yourselves to a hot shower, and meanwhile Daddy and me'll tow your car up to the plain people and then we'll just see."

"We'd like to go into town," Kirsten said. "If that's O.K."

"Sure," the old woman said. She looked at her husband. "Yeah?"

"Of course, yes. Yes."

Main Street was wide and empty, the storefronts colorless in the flat light. A traffic signal swaying over the only intersection ticked like a clock in the quiet. Feeling faint, her stomach cramping, Kirsten sat on the curb. A hand-lettered sign on a sheet of unpainted plywood leaned against a low stucco building, advertising Fresh Eggs, Milk, Broccoli, Cherries, Bread, Potatoes, Watermelon, Strawberries, Root Beer, Antiques.

"No corn," Lance observed, pitching a rock at the sign. "So, you gonna tell me?"

She shook her head. "I just went for a walk, Lance. Nowhere," she said, pressing a print of her hand in the dust. She was wary of Lance, knowing that if she let him he would tap her every mood. He believed that a rich and deserved life ran parallel to theirs, a life that she alone could see, and he would probe her dreams for directions and tease her premonitions for meanings, as if her nightmares and moods gave her access to a world of utter certainty, when in fact Kirsten knew the truth—that every dream was a reservoir of doubt. A life spent revolving through institutions had taught her that. Foster care, detox, detention—even the woman she called Mother was an institution, a fumbling scheme. Her improvised family of shifting faces sat together in common rooms furnished with donated sofas and burned lampshades and ashtrays of cut green glass, in lounges

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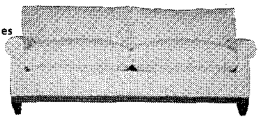

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that were more home to her than home ever was, the inmates more family than she'd ever known.

It was in those lounges, on mornings that never began, through nights that wouldn't end, that Kirsten had elaborated her sense of the other world. She had stripped her diet of the staples of institutional life—the starches, the endless urns of coffee and the sugar cubes and creamers, the cigarettes. She'd cropped her hair short and stopped wearing jewelry, and one afternoon, while the janitor mopped the hallway, she'd slipped the watch from her wrist and dumped it into his dingy bucket of water. She'd cleaned her room and kept it spare, and was considered a model inmate, neat and quiet and nearly invisible. By experimenting, she discovered that the only deeply quiet time on the ward was in the dark hour before dawn, and so she'd begun to wake at 4 A.M., first with an alarm clock, then automatically, easing from sleep into a stillness that was as spacious and as close to freedom as anything inside detention could be. Then she would pull a candle from her dresser drawer, melt it to her bedpost, sit in her chair, and stare at the mirror bolted to her wall. For weeks, she waited for something to appear in the clear depth, looking into the glass as if into a great distance. An instinct told her she was trying too hard, but one morning her arms lost life and went leaden, her hands curled, and the mirror turned cloudy, her face fading as if it had sunk below the surface of the glass, and her true mother's fingers reached toward hers. The next morning, she learned that guiding the images made them go away, and she spent another disconsolate hour staring at herself. Eventually, she was able to sit without panic as her image sank and vanished, and often she emerged from her trances with her own hand stretched to meet the hand in the mirror.

Early in her detention, a social worker had advised Kirsten that the only thing better than heroin was a future, and that had been Lance's gift, a restlessness that seemed focussed on tomorrow, a desire that made the days seem available. But he was impatient, and his sense of her gift was profane and depleting, with every half thought and reverie expected to strike pay dirt.

"O.K., fine," Lance said. "Let's hit the trailer court."

"I'm tired of those smelly trailers."

"We've talked about this I don't know how many times."

"I want the nice houses. Those people have the money."

"They have the money," he said, "because they don't fall for bullshit like ours."

They started up the steps of the biggest and nicest house on the street. With its wide and deep veranda, it seemed to have been built with a different prospect in mind, a more expansive view. Kirsten knocked and wiped her feet on the welcome mat and shuffled through her pamphlets and forms. Dressed in overalls, stuffed with straw, a scarecrow slumped on a porch swing, its head a forlorn sack knotted at the neck with a red kerchief. Kirsten knocked again, and then once more, but no one answered.

"See?" Lance said.

"See nothing," Kirsten said. She marched across the lawn to the neighbor's door. Lance sat on the curb, picking apart a leaf. No one answered her knock. She shuffled through her materials, stalling.

"Time to hit the trailer trash," Lance said.

Kirsten ran to the next house. A ghost hung from the awning, and the family name, Strand, was engraved on a wooden plaque above the door. She drew a deep breath and knocked. For some time now, she'd done things Lance's way. She'd solicited only the homes where she found signs of a shoddy slide—a car on blocks, a windowpane repaired with tape, some loss of contour in the slouching house itself—fissures in somebody else's hope that she and Lance could crawl through. But what had happened? They'd become sad little children, petty thieves and liars, swiping things that no one would miss—five dollars here, ten dollars there—and laying siege to it with large plans, intricate calculations. Lance had his theories, but lately it had occurred to Kirsten that he was conducting his life with folklore. He had a knack for discovering the reverse of everything—the good were bad, the rich were poor, the great were low and mean—and it was no surprise that they were now living lives that were upside down.

A little girl pulled the door open a crack, peering shyly up at Kirsten.

"Is your momma home?"

"Momma!"

The woman who came to the door, wiping her hands on a dish towel, was a fuller version of the little girl, with the same blond hair and blue eyes. Kirsten offered her one of the brochures.

The little girl clung to her mother's leg. She wore one yellow sock and one green, orange dance tights, a purple skirt, a red turtleneck.

Kirsten said, "Did you get dressed all by yourself this morning?"

The little girl nodded and buried her face in the folds of her mother's skirt.

The mother smiled. "Cuts down on the fighting, right, April? We have a deal. She dresses herself, then she has to eat all her breakfast." She handed Kirsten the pamphlet. "I just made some coffee," she said.

Kirsten leaned forward in a faded green chair by the window and watched Lance aimlessly tossing rocks and sticks in the street.

The woman brought two cups of coffee and a plate with Pop-Tarts, toasted and cut in thirds, fanned around the edges.

"You'd be surprised how many around here get into drugs," she said.

"I'm not sure it would surprise me, Ma'am," Kirsten said. "Everywhere I go I hear stories from people who have been touched by this thing." She sipped her coffee. "This tragedy."

"I worry about this little one," the woman said.

Kirsten bit a corner of a Pop-Tart, feeling the hot cinnamon glaze on the roof of her mouth. On the mantel above the fireplace was a collection of ceramic owls. They stared steadily into the room with eyes so wide open and unblinking they looked blind.

"My owls," the woman said. "I don't know how it is you start collecting. It just happens innocently, you think one is cute, then all of a sudden"—she waved her hand in the air—"you've got dumb owls all over the place."

"Keep them busy," Kirsten said.

"What's that?"

"April here—and all kids—if they have something to do they won't have time for drugs."

"That makes sense."

"People think of addicts as these lazy, do-nothing sort of people, but really it's a full-time job. Most of them work at it harder than these farmers I seen in these cornfields. It takes their entire life."

The woman cupped her hands over her knees, then clasped them together. Either her wedding band was on the sill above the kitchen sink, left there after some chore, or she was divorced. Kirsten felt a rush of new words rise in her throat.

"You know what it's like to be pregnant, so I don't have to tell you what it means to have that life in you—and then just imagine feeding your baby poison all day. A baby like that one on the pamphlet, if they're born at all, they just cry all the time. You can't get them quiet."

It was a chaotic purse, and the woman had to burrow down through wadded Kleenex, key rings, and doll clothes before she pulled out a checkbook.

"I never knew my own mother," Kirsten said.

The woman's pen was poised above the check, but she set it down to look at Kirsten. It was a look Kirsten had lived with all her life and felt ashamed of, seeing something so small and frail and helpless at the heart of other people's sympathy. They meant well and it meant nothing.

"And I never really get away from this feeling," she went on. "Sadness, you could call it. My mother—my true mother, I mean—is out there, but I'll never know her. I sometimes get a feeling like she's watching me in the dark, but that's about it. You know that sense you get, where you think something's there and you turn around and, you know, there's nothing there?"

The woman did, she did, with nods of encouragement.

"When I think about it, though, I'm better off than these babies. Just look at that little one's dark face, his shrivelled head. He looks drowned."

Then the woman filled in an amount and signed her name.

"I wish I was invisible," Lance said. "I'd just walk into these houses and they wouldn't even know."

"And do what?"

"Right now I'd make some toast."

"Hungry?"

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"A little."

"Wouldn't they see the bread floating around?"

"Invisible bread."

"You get that idea from your cowboy brain?"

"Don't make fun of the cowboy brain," Lance said. "It got us out of that goddam detention. It got us over that fence."

"We're ghosts to these people, Lance. They already don't see us."

"I'd like to kill someone. That'd make them see. They'd believe then."

"You're just talking," Kirsten said. "I think I'm getting my period."

"Great," Lance said. "All we need."

"Fuck you," Kirsten said. "I haven't had a period in two years."

She turned over one of the pamphlets. Seeing the baby's inconsolable face reminded Kirsten of a song her foster mother used to sing, but while the melody remained the lyrics were dead to her, because merely thinking of this mother meant collaborating in a lie and everything in it was somehow corrupted. Words to songs never returned to Kirsten readily—she had to think hard just to recall a Christmas carol.

"Little babies like that one," she said, "they'll scream all the time. Their little hands are jittery. They have terrible fits where they keep squeezing their hands real tight and grabbing the air. They can't stop shaking, but when you try to hold them they turn stiff as a board."

"To be perfectly honest," Lance said, "I don't really give a fuck about those babies."

"I know."

"We just need money for gas."

"I know."

At the next house, a man answered, and immediately Kirsten smelled the sour odor of settledness through the screen door. A television played in the cramped front room. A spider plant sat on a stereo speaker, still in its plastic pot, the soil dry and hard yet with a pale shoot thriving, growing down to the shag carpet, as if it might find a way to root in the fibres. Pans in the sink he scrubbed as needed, coffee grounds and macaroni on the floor, pennies and dimes caught in clots of dog hair. A sombre, unmoving light in rooms where the windows were never opened, the curtains always closed.

"Some got to be addicted," the man said, after Kirsten explained herself. "They never go away."

"That may be so," Kirsten admitted. "I've thought the same myself."

He went to the kitchen and opened the fridge.

"You want a beer?"

"No thanks."

The blue air around the television was its own atmosphere, and when the man sank back in his chair it was as if he'd gone there to breathe. He looked at Kirsten's breasts, then down at her feet, and finally at his own hands, which were clumsy and large, curling tightly around the bottle.

"Where you staying?"

"About a mile out of town," she said. She handed the man a pamphlet. "I've had that same despair you're talking about. When you feel nothing's going to change enough to wipe out all the problem."

"Bunch of niggers, mostly."

"Did you look at the one there?"

"Tar baby."

"That kid's white," Kirsten said. She had no idea if this was true.

He didn't say anything.

Kirsten nodded at the television. "Who's winning?"

"Who's playing?" the man said. He was using a coat hanger for an aerial. "The blue ones, I guess."

"But isn't it enough? If you can save one baby from this life of hell, isn't that O.K.?"

"Doesn't matter much," he said. "In the scheme of things."

"It would mean everything," Kirsten said, "if it was you."

"But," he said, "it's not me." The blur of the television interested him more. "Where?"

"Where what?"

"Where'd you say you were staying?"

"With these old people, Effie, Effie and his wife, Gen."

He dropped the pamphlet on the floor and pushed himself out of the chair. He swayed and stared dumbly into a wallet full of receipts.

"Well, tonight you say hi to them for me. You tell Effie and Gen Johnny says hi." When he looked at Kirsten, his eyes had gone neutral. "You tell them I'm sorry, and you give them this," he said, leaning toward Kirsten. Then his lips were gone from her mouth, and he was handing her the last five from his billfold.

When they returned to the farmhouse, their car was sitting in the drive and dinner was cooking. The kitchen windows were steamed, and the moist air, warm and fragrant, settled like a perfume on Kirsten's skin. She ran hot water and lathered her hands. The ball of soap was as smooth and worn as an old bone, a mosaic assembled from remnants, small pieces thriftily saved and then softened and clumped together. Everything in the house seemed to have that same quality, softened by the touch of hands—hands that had rubbed the brass plating from the doorknobs, hands that had worn the painted handles of spoons and ladles down to bare wood. Kirsten rinsed the soap away, and Gen offered her a towel.

"You don't have any other clothes, do you?" the old woman asked.

"No, Ma'am," she said.

"Let's go pull some stuff out of the attic," Gen said. She drew a level line from the top of her head to the top of Kirsten's. "We're about the same size, I figure. You won't win any fashion awards—it's just old funny things, some wool pants, a jacket, a couple cardigan sweaters. But you aren't dressed for Iowa." She pronounced it "Ioway."

"I'd appreciate that, Ma'am."

"Doing the kind of work you do, I don't imagine you can afford the extras," she said, as they climbed a set of steps off the upstairs hallway. "But in this country we don't consider a coat extra."

The old woman tugged a string and a bare bulb lit the attic. In the sudden glare, the room seemed at first to house nothing but a jumble of shadows. "I've held on to everything," she said.

"I met a man in town today," Kirsten said. "He said he knew you and Effie."

The old woman slit the tape on a box with her thumbnail and handed Kirsten a sweater that smelled faintly of dust and camphor.

Kirsten held the woman still and kissed her on the lips. "He said to give you that."

"Johnny?" Gen said. "He won't come out here."

Kirsten slipped into the sweater, a cardigan with black leather buttons like a baby's withered navel, a hardened ball of Kleenex in the pocket. She had never known a world of such economy, where things were saved and a room in a house could be set aside for storage. This woman had lived to pass her things on, but now there was no one to take them.

"It was a combine," Kirsten said. "It was this time of year."

The old woman nodded.

"Your little girl doesn't know she's dead. She's still out there."

"How do I know you know all this?"

"I saw her," Kirsten said. "And when me and Lance come to the door last night we never knocked."

From a rack against the wall, the old woman took down a wool overcoat.

"You were waiting up for her. You wait every year."

Gen stepped in front of a cheval mirror and held the coat against her body, modelling it for a moment.

"It wasn't Effie's fault."

"He feels the guilt all the same," the old woman said.

"He had to," Kirsten said.

"Had to what?"

"Live," she said. "He had to live his life, just the same as me and you."

They set four places with the good plates and silver and flowery napkins in the dining room. There was a ham pricked with cloves and ringed around with pineapple and black olives and green beans and salad and bread. Effie fussed over his wife as if he'd never had dinner with her, passing dishes and offering extra helpings, which she refused each time, saying, "Help yourself." Kirsten eventually caught on, seeing that this solicitude was the old man's sly way of offering a compliment and serving himself a little more at the same time. The food was good; it all glistened, the juices from the ham, the butter running off the beans, the oil on the salad. Gen spent most of the meal up on her feet, offering, spooning, heating, filling.

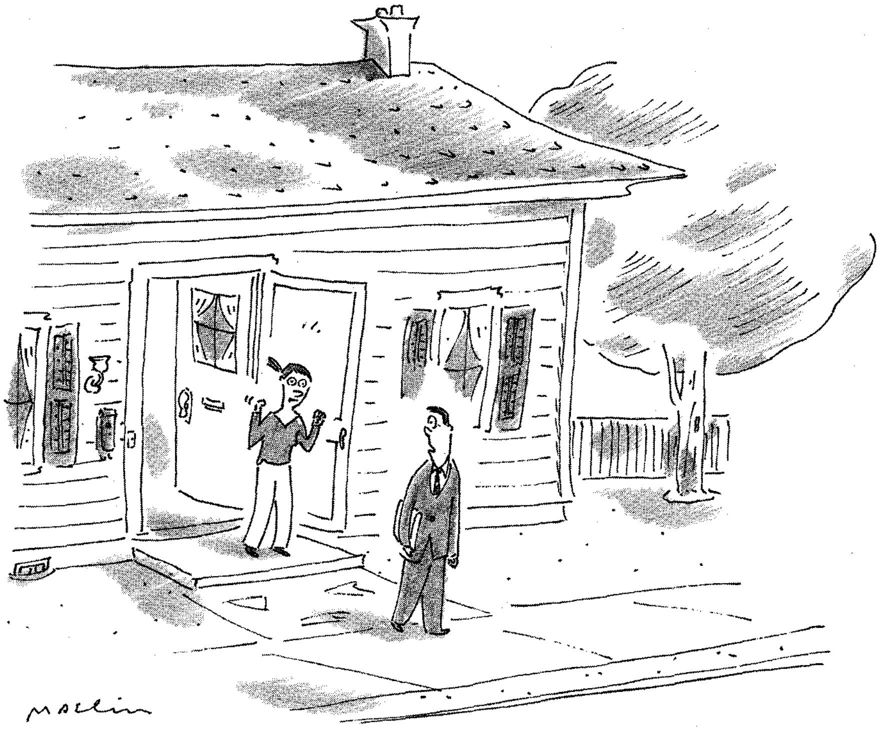
Effie's conversation made a wide, wandering tour of the land. Jesse James used to hide out in this country, he said. Then he was talking about no-till planting, soil that wasn't disked or plowed.

"You got corn in just about everything," he said. "In gasoline, sparkplugs, crayons, toothpaste, disposable diapers—"

"No, really?" Lance said.

"You bet," the old man went on, "and paint, beer, whiskey. You name it."

He said one out of four hogs produced in this country came from Iowa—which he, too, pronounced "Ioway." Hogs till Hell wouldn't have it, he said, thundering the words. The topic of hogs led to a story he'd read about Fidel Castro roasting a pig in a hotel room in New York, and then he told about their travels, a trip to Ireland and another to Hawaii, which he pronounced "Hoy."



"I'm an optometrist, dear—optometrists don't 'kick ass.'"

After dinner, there was pumpkin pie—prize-winning, Effie announced, as the pie tin took center stage on the cleared table.

It was delicious, the filling warm with a buttery vanishing feel on Kirsten's tongue. "What's in it?" she asked.

"Oh," Gen said, "cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, allspice, vanilla—but real pumpkin's the key." Gen, satisfied with the satisfaction at her table, smiled at her husband, who gravely put down his fork.

"When you come," Effie said, "Momma said you mentioned our little girl."

The old man looked across the table at his wife, checking her eyes, or the turn of her mouth, for subtle signs, searching for agreement. It was as if he found what he needed in the space between them, and spoke aloud only to verify that it was there, that someone else had seen it.

"Our little girl," Gen said.

"Your daughter," Kirsten said.

"I wondered if you were an old friend. Maybe from school. Most of them have grown and gone away. I used to see—it would have been so long ago but. . . ." He trailed off, his pale-blue eyes wetly sparking in the weak, splintered light of the chandelier.

Lance said, "Kirsten's been to the other side. She's seen it."

"I would believe you," Effie said. "Some around here don't credit dowsers, but we always have. We never had reason not to. We always had plenty of water." He cleared his throat. "I'd pay anything if you could tell us—anything."

"There's the babies," Lance said.

"I'll help with those babies of yours. I'll donate to your cause. Where you going after this?"

"We're aiming west," Lance said.

Effie squared his fork with the edge of the table. "Well?"

Kirsten was about to speak when she felt a hand slide over her knee, the fingers feeling their way until they rested warmly in her hand, holding it tight. She glanced at the old woman.

"It was only that picture on your wall," she said to Effie.

The picture was the one every child drew a hundred times—the house, the leafy tree, the sun in one corner, the birds overhead, the walkway widening like a river as it flows out from the front door, the family standing on the green grass, a brother, a sister, a mother with her triangle dress, the father twice as big as everybody, the stick fingers overlapping—and that no one ever saved.

MAN AND CAMEL

On the eve of my fortieth birthday
I sat on the porch having a smoke
when out of the blue a man and a camel
happened by. Neither uttered a sound
at first, but as they drifted up the street
and out of town the two of them began to sing.
Yet what they sang is still a mystery to me—
the words were indistinct and the tune
too ornamental to recall. Into the desert
they went and as they went their voices
rose as one above the sifting sound
of windblown sand. The wonder of their singing,
its elusive blend of man and camel seemed
an ideal image for all uncommon couples.
Was this the night that I had waited for
so long? I wanted to believe it was,
but, just as they were vanishing, the man
and camel ceased to sing, and galloped
back to town. They stood before my porch,
staring up at me with beady eyes, and said,
"You ruined it. You ruined it forever."

—*Mark Strand*

"It was just that picture," Kirsten said. "I wish I could say it was more, but it wasn't."

Effie picked up his fork and pressed it against the crumbs of piecrust still on his plate, gathering them. He looked as though he had another question in mind.

"That was the last picture," the old woman said.

"She just drawn it at school," he said. "She put me and Gen in, her and her brother."

"Stephanie," Kirsten said, "and Johnny."

The old man glanced at his wife.

"She spelled all the names on the picture," Kirsten said.

Gen whispered yes, but it was Effie who had to speak up. "I never breathed right or walked right after," he said. "Never farmed, neither, except for my little garden out back."

"That was the best pie I ever had," Kirsten said.

"Show your ribbons, Momma," Effie said.

"Oh, no," Gen said, waving her hand, shooing away the approach, the temptation of something immodest.

"Well, that's right," Effie said. "The pie's right here, huh?" He looked around the table. "The pie's right here."

Kirsten hovered above the field and could hear the rumble of an engine and the crushed stalks snapping, a crackling noise that spread and came from everywhere at once, like fire. The stalks flailed and broke and dust and chaff flew up, and then, ahead, she saw the little girl running down the rows, lost in the maze, unable to search out a safe direction. Suddenly, the girl sat on the ground, her stillness an instinct, looking up through the leaves, waiting for the noise to pass. Kirsten saw her there—a little girl being good, quiet, obedient—but when the sound came closer she flattened herself against the dirt, as if the moment might pass her by. When it was too late, she kicked her feet, trying to escape, and was swallowed up. The noise faded, and a scroll of dirt and stover curved over the fields like handwriting. Then it was gone, and Kirsten saw her own reflection floating in the gray haze of the vanity.

"Lance," she said.

"What?"

"We're leaving," she said.

"Why, what?"

Kirsten gathered the old woman's clothes in a garbage sack and had Lance carry them to the car. She made the bed and fluffed the thin pillows. The house was quiet.

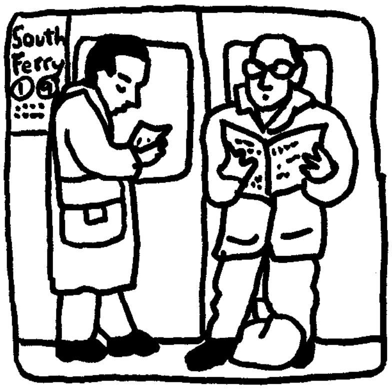
She sat at the small painted vanity, taking a blue crayon from the cup, and wrote a thank-you note. She wrote to the old woman that one second of love is all the love in the world, that one moment is all of them; she wrote that she'd really liked the pumpkin pie, and meant it when she'd said it was the best she'd ever had, adding that she never expected to taste better; she thanked her for the hospitality and for fixing the car; and then she copied down the words to the song the woman she called Mother had sung:

> Where are you going, my little one, little
> one?
> Where are you going, my baby, my own?
> Turn around and you're two, turn around
> and you're four.
> Turn around and you're a young girl
> going out of the door.

Lance was gone for a long time, and Kirsten, looking over the note, considered tearing it up each time she read it. As she sat and waited, she felt a sudden warmth and reached under the elastic of her underpants. When Lance finally returned, he was covered in dry leaves and strings of tassel, as if he'd been out working in the fields. They went outside and pushed the car down the gravel drive, out to the road. It started up, beautifully quiet.

"Wait here," Kirsten said.

She walked back to the yard. It was cool, and the damp night air released a rich smell of dung and soil and straw, a smell Kirsten was sure belonged only to Iowa, and only at certain hours. She pulled her T-shirt over her head. She was reaching for the clothespin that held the old woman's bra when something made her look up. The old woman was standing at the upstairs window, her hand pressed flat against the glass. Kirsten took the bra from the line and slipped the straps over her shoulders. She fastened the clasp and leaned forward, settling her breasts in the small white cups. The women looked at each other for what seemed like an eternity, and then Kirsten pulled on her shirt and ran back to Lance.



Under the moonlight, they drove down mazy roads cut through the fields.

"God damn, the Lord sure hath provideth the corn around here," Lance said. He imitated the old man compulsively. "I'll be plenty glad to get out of this Ioway. Ioway! Christ Almighty. I'm sorry, but those people were corny. And that old guy, jawing on about Castro's fucking pigs in the bathtub. What'd he say, they cooked a hog in that hotel room? What the hell." Lance was taking charge, his mind hard, forging connections. He was feeling good, he was feeling certain. "And God damn I hate ham! Smells like piss!" He rolled down the window and yelled, "Goodbye, fucking Ioway!" He brushed corn silk from his sleeve and shook bits of leaves from his hair.

"Here's something for you." He reached in his pocket and handed her a long heavy chain.

"Looks to me like gold with emeralds and rubies mixed in," he said.

"That's costume jewelry, Lance."

"We'll get it appraised, and you'll see. It's real," he said, bullying the truth, hating its disadvantages. "They won't miss it, Kirsten. They're old, honey. They're gonna die and they got no heirs so don't you worry." He grinned widely and said, "I got something out of the deal, too." He waited. Kirsten just stared at the cheap gaudy chain, pouring it like water from one hand to the other.

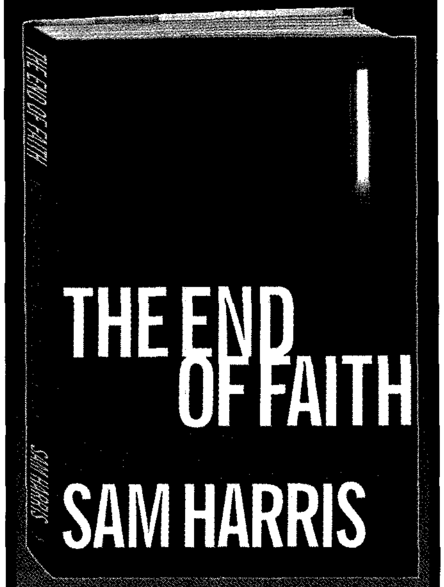
Lance said, "Look in back."

When she turned around, all she saw through the rear window was a trail of dust turning red in the tail-lights.

"Under the blanket," Lance said.

Kirsten reached behind her and pulled away the blanket. The rear seat was overflowing with ears of corn. Lance had turned the whole back of the car into a crib.

"Ioway corn," he said. "Makes me hungry just thinking about it." ♦



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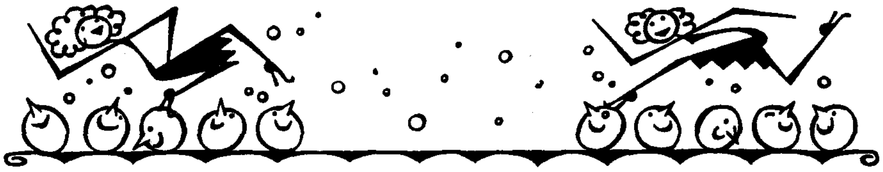


The luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment were devoted—both personally and theoretically—to sociability.

DAVID HUGHES

A CRITIC AT LARGE

NORTHERN LIGHTS

How modern life emerged from eighteenth-century Edinburgh.

BY DAVID DENBY

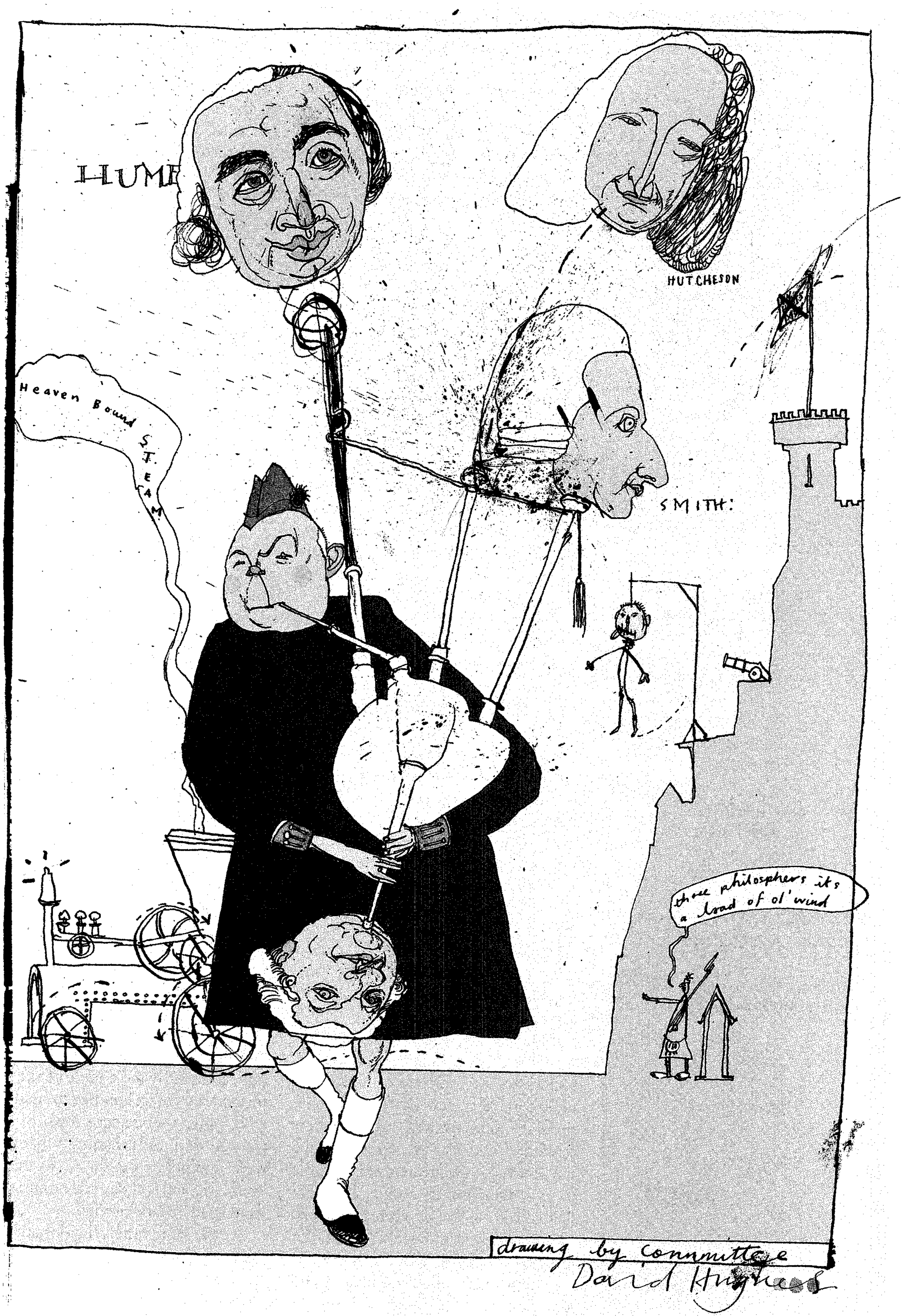
On January 8, 1697, at some time between two and four in the afternoon, an eighteen-year-old student named Thomas Aikenhead was hanged in Edinburgh. Aikenhead had been found guilty of a serious charge: the previous year he had several times told other young men that the doctrines of Christian theology were "a rapsodie of faigned and ill-invented nonsense." Aikenhead's friends, testifying against him, told the court that he had spoken of "the Imposter Christ" and had rejected the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. Aikenhead recanted all these sentiments—he said he had fallen under the spell of atheistical tracts—but no one defended him, and the jury voted for death. On the scaffold, Aikenhead declared that he had come to doubt the objectivity of good and evil, and that he believed moral laws to be the work of governments or men. His disastrous misstep—the joshing blasphemies about Christianity—point toward the anti-Christian side of the French Enlightenment, toward Voltaire's suave pagan ironies and sarcasms. The student's last statement—that moral laws are the work of governments and men—is one of the assumptions behind the American Revolution. The remark anticipates, as well, the British liberalism of the nineteenth century and the enduring work, and enduring trial, of modernity.

That work gathered steam soon after Aikenhead's death. James Buchan, the author of the recent "Crowded with Genius" (HarperCollins; $29.95), a vivacious and erudite celebration of the flowering of Scottish intellectual life in the eighteenth century—the Scottish Enlightenment, as people now call it—maintains that Aikenhead's execution "haunted" the century that followed. Just six decades after the student's rant to his friends, an Edinburgh ecclesiastical assembly attempted to excommunicate the freethinking Scottish philosopher David Hume. Hume, perhaps the most thoroughgoing skeptic in the history of philosophy, believed that religion is a portrait not of how the cosmos works but of how the human mind works—of what men and women want and need. His view of life was worldly and sociable. Like many of the learned Scots, he revered the new science of Copernicus, Bacon, Galileo, Kepler, Boyle, and Newton; he believed in the experimental method and loathed superstition. Hume was admired in Edinburgh by some, disdained or dismissed by many others. But, after a tumultuous debate, the motion to excommunicate him failed, by a vote of fifty to seventeen. Hume's chief tormentor, a splenetic clergyman named George Anderson, died a few months later, and, Buchan concludes, "an ecclesiastical era drew to an end."

In the years between the two trials, Edinburgh had changed from a dour near-theocracy to a cosmopolitan center. Not just Hume and Adam Smith and James Boswell but a host of superb lesser figures burst into public acclaim. The fountainhead was Francis Hutcheson, a kind of pan-Enlightenment figure, who, from 1729 until his death, in 1746, held the chair in moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow, where he broke with tradition by lecturing in English as well as Latin. Hutcheson, a frequent visitor to Edinburgh, was Adam Smith's teacher and he encouraged Hume's early efforts. He was suspicious of metaphysics or any claims not based on observation or experience. Empiricism and the inductive method was the clarion call of the Scottish Enlightenment. Space, time, mass, movement, force—these things could be known in a way that such metaphysical imponderables as "divine purpose" and "final causes" could not.

The intellectual break with the past was drastic and seemingly irreversible. In 1770, James Hutton, an experimental farmer and the owner of a sal ammoniac works, began poking into the peculiar shapes and textures of the Salisbury Crags, the looming, irregular rock formations in Edinburgh. Hutton noticed something astonishing—fossilized fish remains embedded in the rock. The remains suggested that volcanic activity had raised the mass from some depth in the sea. In 1785, he delivered a lecture to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which included the remarkable statement that "with respect to human observation, this world has neither a beginning nor an end." Coolly discarding Biblical accounts of creation, the book that he eventually published, "The Theory of the Earth," helped establish the foundations of modern geology. Shortly before Hutton's investigation, in 1769, James Watt refashioned the steam engine. In recent years, scholars have traced the rudiments of modern psychology, anthropology, the earth sciences, and theories of civil society and liberal education to eighteenth-century Scotland.

For those who keep track of such things, the Scots, in current accounts of intellectual history, have caught up with the French as leading exponents of Enlightenment thought. Yet the learned Scots were remarkably unlike the French *philosophes;* indeed, they were unlike any other group of philosophers that ever existed. In a gigantic study, "The Sociology of Philosophies," published in 1998,


HUME
HUTCHESON
Heaven Bound STEAM
SMITH:
three philosphers its a load of ol' wind
drawing by committee
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Randall Collins assembled structural portraits of the seminal moments in philosophy, both Western and Eastern. Typically, the most important figures in a given cluster of thinkers (perhaps three or four men) would jockey for centrality while cultivating alliances with other thinkers or students on the margins. In the Scottish group, however, there was little of the bristling, charged, and exclusionary fervor of the Diderot-d'Alembert circle; or of the ruthless atmosphere found in Germany in the group that included Fichte, the Schelling brothers, and Hegel; or of the conscious glamour of the existentialists in postwar Paris. The Scots vigorously disagreed with one another, but they lacked the temperament for the high moral drama of quarrels, renunciations, and reconciliation. Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith, along with Adam Ferguson and Thomas Reid, were all widely known, but none of them were remotely cult figures in the style of Hegel, Marx, Emerson, Wittgenstein, Sartre, or Foucault. To an astonishing degree, the men supported one another's projects and publications, which they may have debated at a club that included amateurs (say, poetry-writing doctors, or lawyers with an interest in science) or in the fumy back room of some dark Edinburgh tavern. In all, the group seems rather like an erudite version of Dickens's chattering and benevolent Pickwick Club.

The Scots were conservatives and radicals at the same time. They prized social order, and peace and quiet; they also sought intellectual revolution—new ways of looking at how the mind works, how morality works, and how we live in society. The religious strife of the seventeenth century, including the judicial murder of a reckless student, disgusted them. They could not imagine, and did not desire, civil society without religion. But they wanted to ease God out of scientific research and out of political and social life, too. And they wanted to naturalize morality—to locate the foundations of morals somewhere else than in revelation and fear of eternal damnation. Indeed, their greatest ambition was to try to establish something implied by Aikenhead's gallows speech: an account of civil society demonstrating that legal and ethical rules were of human origin.

Their version of morals had to compete with some nasty suppositions. In "Leviathan," published in 1651, Thomas Hobbes had developed a mechanistic view of human behavior: men were entirely amoral; they reacted positively to anything that gratified their self-interest, calling it "good," but the reaction was no more than a mechanical response to a stimulus. Unless they were overawed by a strong central authority, men would quickly be at one another's throats. The Scots were also familiar with the Duc de La Rochefoucauld's "Maximes," a wickedly funny collection of aphorisms that dissolved virtue in the acid of self-interest. If we performed a benevolent act, La Rochefoucauld suggested, we did so in order to stoke our vanity or to seek a return of favor. But Hutcheson, and also Hume and Smith, were repelled by such fashionable cynicism; they were determined to prove that virtue was grounded in human nature itself.

How could so many modern ways of thinking have emerged in so seemingly backward a place? Buchan, a journalist, essayist, and novelist, describes the physical substance of Edinburgh with enormous gusto. In 1700, the city had its towers, its ancient castle, and a magnificently broad long street running down its center. A walled city built on a high butte with a gentle lake on one side, Edinburgh was stunningly beautiful but dirty and poor, a foul-smelling, mucky place whose citizens tossed their wastes onto the street at night while a cloud of peat smoke hung in the sky above—"auld reekie," it was affectionately called by its inhabitants. The common diet, dreary and conducive to alcoholism, consisted of fish, pottage, milk, kale, and a great deal of home-brewed small beer. James Boswell, when he was not in London pursuing Dr. Johnson and women, may have been Edinburgh's most famous drunk, but there were many others. Everyone, including children, drank whiskey, claret, rum, and ale. By the middle of the century, there were six hundred drinking establishments servicing a town of only forty thousand. Buchan says that there were few public buildings, so that all legal, civic, and ecclesiastical business was conducted in dark taverns.

At the same time, religious authorities nagged at Edinburgh's citizenry. The doctrinaire were unwilling to countenance privacy of belief—the Devil, after

all, lurked everywhere, so individual conscience was a matter for the community and the Church. As late as 1719, Presbyterian tracts raged against truants from Sabbath worship "walking through fields, parks, links, meadows," or, even worse, "misspending their time in idle discourse, vain and useless communication." These Sabbath strictures were enforced by a kind of religious police known as the Seizers, who, operating like Saudi enforcers today, collared people on the street and sent them into dank churches, where they were subjected to threatening sermons on the punishments for fornication. Edinburgh in the early eighteenth century, Buchan says, "looked and smelled like a medieval city."

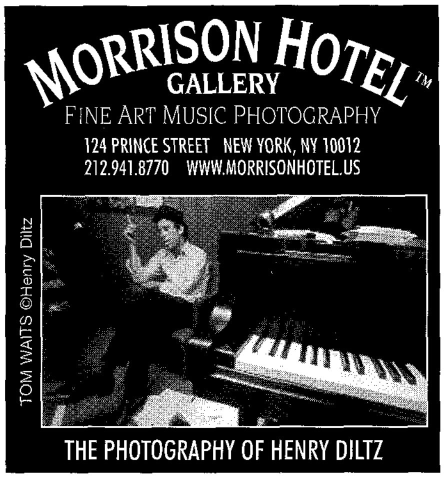
It was an inauspicious place for intellectual revolution. Yet there were long-standing institutions of true distinction in Edinburgh, including the printing presses and the university. And Scottish Protestantism, however sour and intrusive, was a revolutionary force. John Knox, the brimstone-tempered Scot who founded the Presbyterian movement in the sixteenth century, had insisted on universal literacy; worshippers were expected to read the Bible and enter into intense communion with God on their own. Every congregation had its school, its local library, its contentious readers. And those who were well educated were extraordinarily well educated. Scotland had long maintained close ties to universities in Holland and France, and the scholars returning from Leiden or the Sorbonne were up to date on European intellectual currents in a way that men at Cambridge and Oxford often were not.

The tie with England was fraught with ambiguous tensions and dependencies, but, in the end, the economic benefits were real. The country's political union with England, in 1707, may have occasioned resentment and nationalist nostalgia, but it gave Scotland access to world markets dominated by the British Empire. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Edinburgh had become prosperous from foreign trade. The harbor at nearby Leith was filled with ships, and public companies were being formed to produce iron, sugar, glass, and rope. The city's need for new housing for its emerging class of merchants, manufacturers, bankers, and lawyers, as well as for some venue besides taverns in which to conduct business, was finally answered by the construction, starting in the seventeen-fifties, of the superb New Town, with its Georgian squares and handsome houses and ballrooms. In religion, affluence helped tame doctrinaire fury into debonair moderation; Edinburgh ministers became polished and even elegant figures who wrote poetry and appeared at fashionable dinner parties and clubs. By the second half of the century, Buchan says, Edinburgh represented "a new social existence that is suave, class-conscious, sensitive, law-abiding, hygienic . . . in short, modern." The Scots were free men in a state of protected semi-responsibility, and they found themselves eager to examine the basis of society.

Early in his career, David Hume devoted a chapter in "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" (1748) to disputing miracles. One might have supposed that miracles were beyond proof and therefore beyond argument, but Hume didn't think so. "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature," he asserts, and then engages in a lawyerly interrogation of the evidence. What's the number and reliability of the witnesses? How close are they to the event itself? For Hume, the question is not whether miracles happen but under what conditions belief in them spreads. He moves the discussion from revelation to epistemology and arrives at the following mischievous conclusion: "No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish."

Hume was greatly impressed by the recent news that nature operated according to laws provable by repeated experiment; he must have feared that the uncritical acceptance of Biblical miracles put at risk our ability to distinguish truth from falsehood. If it was possible to clear away the superstition and speculation that had passed for science in the past, could something analogous be done in political and moral philosophy?

Wisdom, for Hume, begins with the acknowledgment of uncertainty—of the *limits* of what we know. We have percep-



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tions of the world in the form of impressions, Hume says, some of which, in recollection, become ideas—that is, the ideas have the force of impressions, without which they are meaningless. We're able to navigate our way through the world because such impressions of it are coherent; they support one another with respect to time and space. But the power of reason to prove much of what we know is weak, and Hume denied that our beliefs about the world could be ascertained with anything like scientific certainty. Events occur in a particular sequence (a billiard ball, struck by another, moves forward), yet reason cannot establish that one event necessarily causes another. Sequence should not be confused with causality. The best we can say is that our repeated experience of the sequence allows us to believe that it will occur in the future. Hume was fascinated by what we would call consciousness, but he always leads us back to experience, which is the arena, the test, the goal.

Hume was born in Edinburgh in 1711. His father was a lawyer who died when the boy was very young, his mother the daughter of a prominent judge. Hume was being groomed for law when, at the age of thirteen, epic poetry and philosophy overwhelmed him; he read obsessively until, at eighteen, he developed hypochondriacal tendencies and suffered a kind of nervous breakdown, an event from which he recovered by exercising and by eating a great deal (a lifelong habit—he became enormously fat). A convivial bachelor, he required company, preferably a dinner party at home (he prided himself on his "cookery") or a debate at the Select Society, a group of fifty of Edinburgh's most clubbable and erudite minds. Hume had no recorded romantic life, though he enjoyed the company of elegant women in Edinburgh and in Paris, where he was certifiably a success ("*le bon David*") among the aristocratic ladies who entertained intellectual luminaries. His friend Adam Smith, born a little later, in 1723, was an asexual bachelor, too. The men shared temperamental quirks, derived, perhaps, from similarities in their childhoods. Both were reared by their mothers—Smith's father, a customs inspector, died before he was born, and as a middle-aged man Smith still lived with his mother (and his maiden cousin). Except for the recklessly energetic Boswell, who recounted his heroic copulations in his journal, the Scottish intellectuals were given less to sensuality than to the comforts of a solitary domestic routine and easy fellowship with friends.

Sociability was what mattered, and in their writings the world, teeming yet measurable, is always with them, so much so that reading them confirms the reality behind such abundant eighteenth-century fictions as Henry Fielding's "Tom Jones." The view is masculine, conservative, hedonistic: good fellows write poetry, study science and philosophy, do business, practice law, and gather at the end of the day for a drink, and let's not have any nonsense about austerity or purity.

Defining certain regularities in one's experience of the world—if not with scientific precision, then at least with observational rigor—was central to the problem of moral theory. What *were* the social arrangements in which these regularities appeared and in which our moral life was carried out? By the mid-eighteenth century, the Scots had realized that the acts of kings and queens and the words of religious or humanist sages were less important—less formative of social life—than such things as modern manufacture, commerce, and international trade.

Early in "The Wealth of Nations," the colossal book published in 1776 but first conceived many years before, Adam Smith announced, "Nobody ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another with another dog. Nobody ever saw one animal by its gestures and natural cries signify to another, this is mine, that yours; I am willing to give this for that." Looking about him at mid-century, Smith saw a great deal of "trucking" and bartering—a vast, buzzing, articulated landscape of productive and commercial activity that connected everyone to everyone else. In a stirring passage, he evokes the seemingly rude existence of a day laborer. The man's woollen coat, kitchen implements, and glass windows can be produced only by the combined labor and coördinated exchange of literally thousands of individuals ("ship-builders, sailors, sail-makers, rope-makers . . ."), as well as by the contribution of such institutions as farms, mines, mills, smithies, shipping companies. National wealth, Smith insisted, consists in the sum total of productive activities, such as those which furnish the laborer's house—and not, as earlier economic theory maintained, in the amount of gold and silver hoarded in state treasuries, or the total agricultural output protected by tariffs. Smith's analytic framework amounts to a shift in consciousness of how the world works, of how individuals fit into a national economy: it is the birth of the gross domestic product, the recognition that national wealth is something created by the entire populace.

For Smith, commerce was the glue that held the show together. "The offering of a shilling, which to us appears to have so plain and simple a meaning, is in reality offering an argument to persuade one to do so and so," Smith said in an early lecture. "And in this manner everyone is practicing oratory on others through the whole of his life." The men and women in this vast system of speech are performing as rational agents, freely selling their labor and goods, exchanging, buying, and consuming. This rational actor calculates his best advantage in any given situation and gets what he wants by appealing to the same calculating instinct in others. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner," he wrote, "but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages." What Smith is describing is the ethos that came to be called capitalism. A startling irony proceeds from his formulation, an irony confounding to the literal-minded and outrageous to those who demand moral consistency of the world. Each man, imagining that he's working for his own advantage, is at the same time inadvertently working to increase the general wealth. The mechanism that transforms the many self-advancing efforts into general affluence is, of course, the market, along with its attendant bodyguard and ruthless enforcer, competition—the two of them, in tandem, ceaselessly setting wages and prices, adjusting supply and demand, goading, redirecting, enlarging, rewarding, annihilating.

In Smith's system, commercial man might not be docile, exactly, but he could be governed, and, just as important, he could learn to tolerate his neighbor's religion in order to do business with him. In the nineteenth century, Smith's happy view of life in commercial society was rejected by the Romantics as insipid and by the Marxists as naïve, a mask for the despair of alienation. The later development of industrial capitalism, including the emergence, after Smith's death, of dangerous factories and the immiseration of workers jammed into enormous sordid cities, was not something that Smith had envisioned. But his frequently stated belief in minimal government interference with the economy—the doctrine of laissez-faire—should not be taken as passive acceptance of the depredations of capitalism. Adam Smith was not an earlier version of Milton Friedman or Jack Kemp. He would not have been pleased with the inequities of income in the United States today. He defended the rights of labor and deplored the withering effects of specialization on the individual worker. Smith was a liberal in both the modern and the classical sense. Buried in the work of the great framer of capitalism as a vast impersonal system, there is a modern humanist.

Arnie Levin

"Well, we're down to bare brick, natural wood, and raw nerves."

• •

Modern market societies, Smith and Hume thought, made men more reasonable, even more "polite," but neither of them supposed that commercial relations provided all the values that men needed to live by. Their mentor Francis Hutcheson, writing in 1725, had suggested that, just as people derived involuntary pleasure from beauty, so they spontaneously delighted in performing or observing benevolent actions. Benevolence made us feel good in the same way that a Greek statue does. The moral response matched the aesthetic response; disgust at ugliness was matched by disgust at cruelty; together, these responses constituted a kind of natural moral sense. Hutcheson was so sure that we enjoyed the spectacle of virtue that he made a weird kind of hedonic calculation, a numerical system in which different acts were rated according to the pleasure they gave.

Hutcheson, who invented the phrase "the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers,” which the utilitarians made so much of in the next century, reflects the peculiarly sunny temperament of the Scottish moralists. His system depends on our possession of favorable innate tendencies; to him, the moral sense was just that—a sense, akin to sight or smell. Hume, in “An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals” (1751), tries to put a little muscle into Hutcheson’s pleasant ideas. He begins by admitting, as always, the limited powers of reason: by itself, reason can no more give us notions of virtue and vice than it can prove a necessary connection between events. “ ’Tis not contrary to reason,” Hume once said, “to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger.” Reason lacks power to command, judge, or reform behavior. Common observation suggests, on the contrary, that morality is based on sentiment and passion: we look at Nero, or at a neighborhood thief, and we feel disgust. Like knowledge of the world, moral sentiment begins with particular *impressions*—a key idea, since it suggests that we should make moral judgments individually rather than by category.

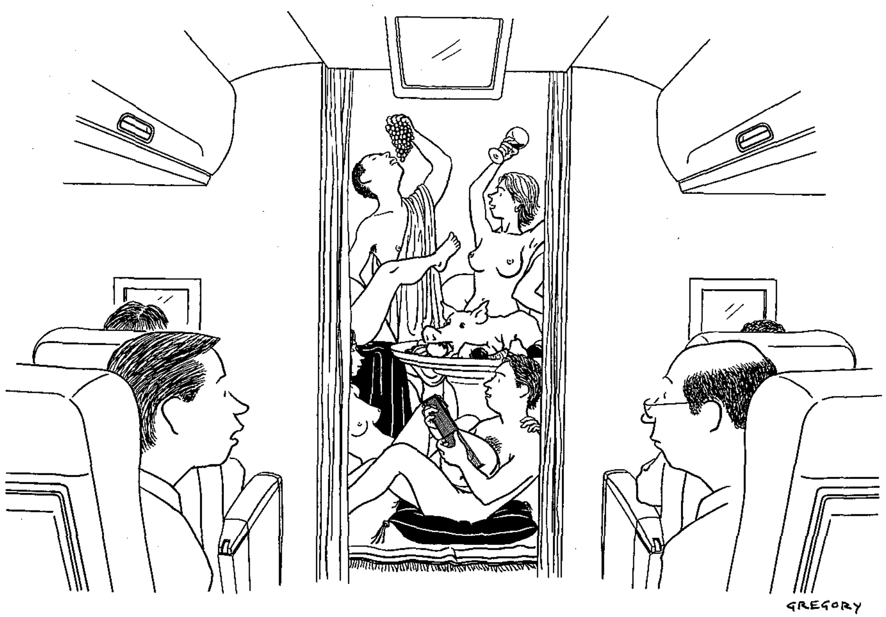
What causes the impressions? It turns out that there are a few kindly elements in human nature, caused by the experience of family love in childhood, that could be called universal:

> It is sufficient for our present purpose, if it be allowed, what surely, without the greatest absurdity, cannot be disputed, that there is some benevolence, however small, infused into our bosom; some spark of friendship for human kind; some particle of the dove, kneaded into our frame, along with the elements of the wolf and serpent. Let these generous sentiments be supposed ever so weak; let them be insufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body; they must still direct the determinations of our mind, and where everything else is equal, produce a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind, above what is pernicious and dangerous. A *moral distinction*, therefore, immediately arises; a general sentiment of blame and approbation; a tendency, however faint, to the objects of the one, and a proportionable aversion to those of the other.

In describing the benefits of human nature, Hume sounds almost plaintive; he asks for our belief in a minimal case for human decency. Beginning with this minimal case, Hume, in an earlier book, “A Treatise of Human Nature” (1740), laid out a genealogy of morals. In the family unit of primitive society, people acted generously toward one another, so there was no need for formal rules. But when families banded together for convenience, safety, and support, property fell into dispute, and formal rules, which is what Hume means by “justice”—what’s yours and what’s mine—became necessary. As communities develop in size, men’s natural selfishness, without disappearing, is joined by enlightened self-interest—an approval of what is good for the community and thus good for you and me. That common standard created by enlightened self-interest is what we call morality. In Hume’s language, universal traits like benevolence, kindliness, and love for one’s children are “natural” virtues, while socially necessary traits like courage, honesty, justice, and loyalty are “artificial” virtues; that is, they are engendered by our need to live with one another. All societies admire such virtues and disdain cowardice, dishonesty, treachery, and meanness. We are angered by criminal behavior even if we are not hurt by it personally. Everyone, or almost everyone, weeps or smiles at the same point in a play. Human nature exists, and moral codes created by our need to live together exist, too.

You can see the common standards, Hume says, by noting the language that people use. If someone designates another as “adversary,” he speaks only for himself; if he describes another as “odious,” he is appealing to widespread feelings of distaste. Hume is speaking not only of the common language of business or law but of the gossip at the vegetable market and the water well. Hobbes and La Rochefoucauld and the other moral skeptics, it turns out, were partly right in their description of human nature, but, in the end, paradoxically, a moral code is created, not defeated, by self-interest: we create a code precisely because we have mutually opposed interests but must learn to live with one another. If one studies the language, Hume urged, one can see that most people approve of what is socially useful, disapprove of what is socially destructive, and remain indifferent to acts that express individual self-interest. We can build morality on the first two and allow the third a free existence without judging it one way or another.

Hume’s “Principles of Morals” lacks beauty, passion, and drama. There is no perversity or darkness in this worldly view. Hume’s is the everyday view, the life-as-it-is-commonly-lived view, a forerunner of both utilitarianism and pragmatism. Human nature, sentiment, and sociality itself create morals. In a society held together by commerce and property, and by law based on property—modern democratic society—such commonsense ideas offer the minimal but necessary faith. Hume and the other Enlightenment Scots anticipated a civil order in which most people would continue to adhere to religion but would rely less and less on God as a guide to everyday life. Such reliance would be replaced by a modified confidence in the successful functioning of institutions like the legal system, the civil service, schools and universities, and business and commerce. The administration of such enterprises is



“Boy, first class sure looks good.”

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the ideal of "instrumental rationality," as Max Weber called it, by which things run impersonally and reasonably well for everyone—not a spiritually impassioned way of life, to be sure, and by no means sufficient to satisfy many of our desires, but one that allows, as an over-all framework, for the greatest individual development, the greatest freedom. It's a framework that most Americans, even very religious Americans, actually depend on from day to day—the unspoken rationale of American secular liberty. Capitalism and liberal society don't seem especially heroic until threatened by fanatics; only then do people have to fight for what they've taken for granted.

Returning to his house in the New Town one day in 1769, Hume, monstrously fat by then, fell into a bog and despaired of extrication until an old fishwife happened by. She agreed to help "Hume the atheist" only after he recited the Lord's Prayer. By late in the century, the energies of the Scottish Enlightenment had begun to run down. The mood of Edinburgh was soured by nasty anti-Catholic disturbances in 1779 (a precursor of the violent Gordon Riots, in London, the following year). When the revolution came to France, in 1789, intellectual Edinburgh turned reactionary and fearful—the threat of being blamed for "sedition" stifled what was left of the spirit of radical inquiry. The city remained a cosmopolitan commercial center, but for some years the serious intellectual and political work had been done elsewhere—in America, for instance. Jefferson's ideal of sociability in the new republic was, according to Gary Wills, influenced by Hutcheson; Madison learned a great deal from both Hume's political theories and Smith's "invisible hand"; Hamilton knew "The Wealth of Nations" backward and forward; and all three campaigned successfully to make the separation of church and state a feature of the Constitution. Summing up the influence of the Scots, Buchan says, "In demanding that experiment not inherited truth define the business of living, the Edinburgh philosophers stamped the West with its modern scientific and provisional character. They created a world that tended towards the egalitarian and, within reason, the democratic. Their prestige in English-speaking lands was carried on the wave of British and American expansion into every corner of the world."

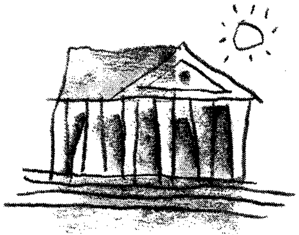
These sentences may make some of us wince. The wall between church and state that we are urging on the Iraqis has grown thinner in America. And a country in which something like seventy per cent of the population believes in Satan and a considerable number disdains evolutionary biology is unlikely to be one in which "experiment not inherited truth" is flourishing. At the moment, religiosity—the substitution of faith for common sense in practical affairs—is running amok in the United States, and intrusions of religion into science, politics, and culture, contrary to the spirit of the Founding Fathers, have become commonplace. For us, as for the Scots, modernity is a project; it has never been a settled accomplishment.

Describing his crisis at the age of eighteen, Hume later wrote to a friend, "I found a certain Boldness of Temper, growing in me, which was not enclin'd to submit to any Authority," a rebellion that led him to "seek out some new Medium, by which Truth might be establisht'." Aikenhead the blasphemer was also eighteen when he made the remarks that destroyed him, and it's tempting to see the great philosopher and the loudmouth student as spiritual comrades joined by an inability to accept dictation from others. Aikenhead wept in his cell as he awaited execution, but recovered his nerve and made his scaffold speech. In 1776, a few weeks after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, David Hume lay on his deathbed as a man of sixty-five, and was described as remarkably calm by all the friends who came to visit him. In retrospect, Hume's death scene has taken on an emblematic significance. He may have been the first famous man in Christian Europe to face the prospect of annihilation—he refused to believe in an afterlife—without alarm. He joked with Boswell that immortality, if it existed, would have to be universal and would therefore permit infants without reason and worthless drunks to be saved. What Hume and the other Scottish savants wanted was a society that was not ruled by fear or by superstition imposed by authority; a society that was burgeoning, progressive, affluent, and tolerant. The ideals that they lived by, and the institutions that sprang from them, remain as strong, and as fragile, as ever. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

War Trash, *by Ha Jin (Pantheon; $25).* Ha Jin's new novel is the fictional memoir of a Chinese People's Volunteer, dispatched by his government to fight for the Communist cause in the Korean War. Yu Yuan describes his ordeal after capture, when P.O.W.s in the prison camp have to make a wrenching choice: return to the mainland as disgraced captives, or leave their families and begin new lives in Taiwan. The subject is fascinating, but in execution the novel often seems burdened by voluminous research, and it strains dutifully to illustrate political truisms. In a prologue, Yuan claims to be telling his story in English because it is "the only gift a poor man like me can bequeath his American grandchildren." Ha Jin accurately reproduces the voice of a non-native speaker, but the labored prose is disappointing from an author whose previous work—"Waiting" and "Ocean of Words"—is notable for its vividness and its emotional precision.

Joy Comes in the Morning, *by Jonathan Rosen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25).* In her work as a hospital volunteer, Deborah Green, a Manhattan rabbi, encounters an ailing Holocaust survivor—recovering from a debilitating stroke and a suicide attempt—and his skeptical son. To complicate matters, she is beautiful and single, while the skeptical son is a shy bachelor; the romance causes crises of faith for both, as they negotiate their divergent attitudes toward their religion. As the story moves from wedding to funeral and back again, and Deborah officiates at the momentous changes in other people's lives, she increasingly finds her own life empty of the things that she has always counselled her congregation to treasure. Served with the merest teaspoon of schmaltz, Rosen's touching novel of Jewish manners thoughtfully addresses the question of whether piety can teach us faith.



Full Bloom, *by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp (Norton; $35).* Georgia O'Keeffe's long and prolific life lasted nearly a century, but much of it was comparatively uneventful. Her farmgirl childhood in Wisconsin and the retreat to New Mexico that occupied the second half of her life were separated by a glamorous period—a thirty-year sojourn in bohemian New York, where she was for a time the wife, muse, and protégée of the aging photographer Alfred Stieglitz. It was he who promoted her as an artist, and initially O'Keeffe struggled to assert her autonomy. Drohojowska-Philp's biography painstakingly assembles the details of O'Keeffe's life—love letters, financial problems, a schoolteacher who said that her drawing of a child's hand was too small—but occasionally fails in the attempt to make them seem important in relation to the art. "Where I come from, the earth means everything," O'Keeffe said, and she seems to have lived most of her life in accordance with this principle.

The Subway Pictures, *by Peter Peter (Random House; $24.95).* Between 2001 and 2002, Peter rode the subway almost every day, snapping photographs with a little camera hidden in a bag. The product is this collection of seventy-seven color pictures. Most of Peter's subjects are not well-off; some are homeless. All of them, Peter says, "seemed incredibly beautiful to me." Nor is this the Walker Evans-type of craggy beauty familiar in depictions of the poor; the bag lady's bags are a nice green, and clean. One picture, called "Three Kings," shows a weary mother with three little boys wearing paper crowns from Burger King. They have had a good day; one of the boys carefully adjusts his crown. Many of the photographs were shot in the wake of 9/11, and they radiate the tenderness toward the city that marked that time.

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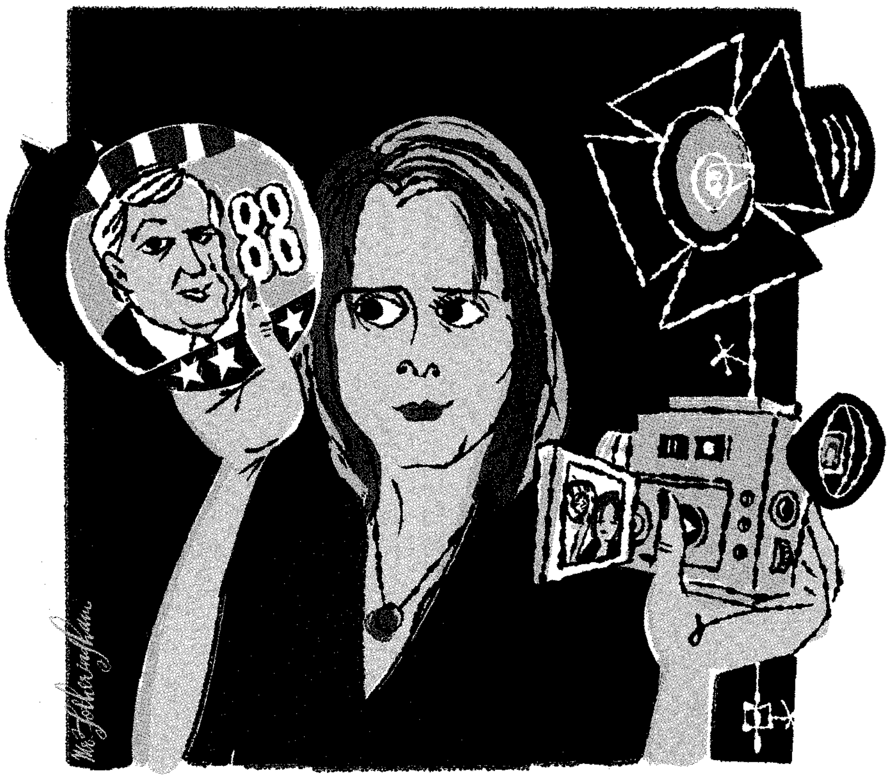
ON TELEVISION

TANNER REVISITED

Robert Altman and Garry Trudeau revive their candidate.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

In her new documentary, "Diary of a Political Tourist," Alexandra Pelosi, who spent nearly two years chasing after the Democrats who were themselves chasing after the 2004 Presidential nomination, asks Howard Dean, as he's hurrying down a New York City street in 2003, why he's carrying his own bag. Can't he get anyone to do it for him? she says. Dean replies cheerfully that it's a point of pride with him. Pelosi's film is a follow-up to her 2002 "Journeys with George," a self-consciously goofy, boys-on-the-bus romp through George W. Bush's campaign, and it will air on HBO next week, at around the same time that another political sequel will be shown on the Sundance Channel: "Tanner on Tanner," Robert Altman and Garry Trudeau's four-episode follow-up to their 1988 HBO series "Tanner '88," premières October 5th. In a scene in "Tanner '88," the story of a fictional Democratic Presidential candidate named Jack Tanner, an aide points at a wire photo of Tanner carrying *his* luggage and declares, "Carrying your own bag is the wrong symbol at the wrong time. It says that you either can't, or won't, delegate. It says Jimmy Carter." Suffice it to say that such parallels and instances of overlap among all four works abound, partly because, while political campaigns may be endlessly interesting, the number of things that can be said about them is finite, and the targets they present for criticism, satire, and humor are fairly obvious, even to outsiders. It's what you do with the material that counts.



The Democrat's daughter: Cynthia Nixon as a self-absorbed documentarian.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Pelosi seems to have made her second film because the success of the first one gave her the opportunity to do so; Altman and Trudeau also had opportunity on their side, provided both by the critical success of their earlier series and by their reputations and connections. But they benefitted, too, from having an idea that still held possibilities after sixteen years. "Tanner '88" was a blend of fact and fiction; in addition to its cast of actors—which included Michael Murphy as Jack Tanner, Cynthia Nixon as his daughter, Alex, and Pamela Reed as his campaign manager, T. J. Cavanaugh—the series featured actual politicians, Washington insiders, journalists, and celebrities playing themselves as characters in Trudeau's story, which itself made use of the real-world campaign and its trajectory. (Trudeau has the writing credit for both series; Altman directed both; and the two share executive-producer billing.) "Tanner '88" set the table for "Tanner on Tanner," but the latter is not exactly a continuation of the story, although we do find out what has happened to the characters in the intervening years. While the first series was a fictional documentary, the second falls under the heading of what has come to be known as a mockumentary: a documentary about documentaries, a sendup of our current mania for watching ourselves watch ourselves.

Alex, who was a college student in "Tanner '88," and a helper, and sometimes an impeder, in her father's campaign, is now a documentary director and film teacher, and she is making a movie about her father's defeat; at the same time, one of her students is filming *her* for *his* documentary. As she was sixteen years earlier, she is self-absorbed, bad at reading people, and, despite being a devoted daddy's girl, prone to putting her father in embarrassing situations. Though she describes her documentary to a reporter from *Us* as "a deconstruction of the campaigning process from my father's perspective," by midway through the series it's clear that the movie is all about her. We all know that the filming of an event can change the way the event unfolds, but, in the case of Alex's project, her hysteria and her social inappropriateness tend only to stop events in their tracks. In the third episode, she shows up at a gym hoping to shoot her father playing squash with Al Franken. Franken, caught by surprise, won't coöperate. In a scene at the Democratic Convention, which is wincingly, painfully funny—it overflows with Larry David-style awkwardness and bad vibes—Alex and John Kerry's daughter Alexandra, who is also filming a documentary, vie for face time with Ron Reagan, who finally loses patience and walks out.

In a way, "Tanner '88" says as much about the current political moment as its successor does; for one thing, the earlier series was, in part, a response to eight years of a radical Republican regime, and its themes and its dialogue still reverberate. "Tanner on Tanner," though it comes at an analogous historical moment, is, until the final episode, more about pop culture than it is about politics. It is also, at two hours over all, a third the length of "Tanner '88," and is, of necessity, missing characteristic Altman longueurs—its scenes are more crisply cut, and the dimension that music added to the first "Tanner" is absent. Yet there is great fun in seeing the actors reprise their roles after sixteen years; T. J., still hard as nails, is now working for Kerry, and Andrea (Ilana Levine), who, in Tanner's campaign, started out as, basically, a doughnut wrangler and ended up being a valuable coördinator, is the producer of Alex's film. A couple of other performers from the original turn up as well, but, with one exception—a Democratic pollster who is now a Log Cabin Republican and appears on Fox News—they are all pretty much the same as they used to be, just older. The parade of celebrities and journalists through this year's "Tanner" is impressive, though that is hardly surprising: who but the sternest Calvinist would turn down the chance to be in a Robert Altman production, even if it meant blurring the lines between being seen as a professional and being seen to be performing the part of a professional? (Bob: call me.) Some of these cameos pay off, and one of them is just too good to give away, other than to say that it delightfully calls to mind the moment when Marshall McLuhan turns up in "Annie Hall."

With "Tanner on Tanner," Altman and Trudeau may be lamenting the fact that we're now more interested in the moviemaking process than in the political process. As Martin Scorsese says in bemusement when Alex buttonholes him at the celebrity eatery Elaine's in one episode, "*Everybody's* making pictures." Not many people seem to want to grow up to be President anymore, but everybody wants to direct.

Pelosi couldn't have known, while she was on the road with George W. Bush, that he would win the Republican nomination, let alone the general election, but when he did her film acquired added value; there was no other portrait of Bush comparable to what we saw in "Journeys with George." While following him around the country, Pelosi also traced her own journey through the months of transportation delays, down-in-the-trenches intimacy with the travelling-press pack (including the inevitable aborted romance), too many turkey sandwiches, and an endless round of dishwater-dull staged events. As one of the journalists says, most of their time is spent "doing really stupid things in stupid places, with stupid people." Through all this, Bush appeared to be a master handler of the press. If Pelosi, whose method is to ask idiotic questions—to be the "wacky girl," as one reporter put it—got on his nerves, he didn't show it. Of course, Bush knew better than to alienate the daughter of a force in Democratic politics—Pelosi's mother is Representative Nancy Pelosi, who is now the House Minority Leader.

But the charm doesn't work the second time around. "Diary of a Political Tourist" is about as inspired as the sequel to "Dumb and Dumber." Pelosi's naughtiness has no purpose in this film; she uses it not to develop a relationship with one person but as an assault weapon against the whole group of Democratic hopefuls, peppering them with questions like "Are you a dead man walking?" (to Kerry at a low ebb in his prospects). She's gone from being Eloise at the Plaza to being a fly in the soup. All the candidates handle her smoothly and politely, but they know that they have nothing to gain by consorting with her, so they don't. When Kerry eventually grants her the interview she's been asking for, she tells him that there's a "dance between the candidate, his staff, and the press, and I'm trying to show that dance," and though the little John McEnroe in your head may be saying, "You can*not* be serious!," Kerry keeps his cool. It is not until the last line of the film that Pelosi expresses a worked-out thought, a wry observation about democracy. For the most part, she is as deluded as Alex Tanner about what she's up to—the "dance" she's showing is merely the result of her shooting bullets at people's feet. ♦

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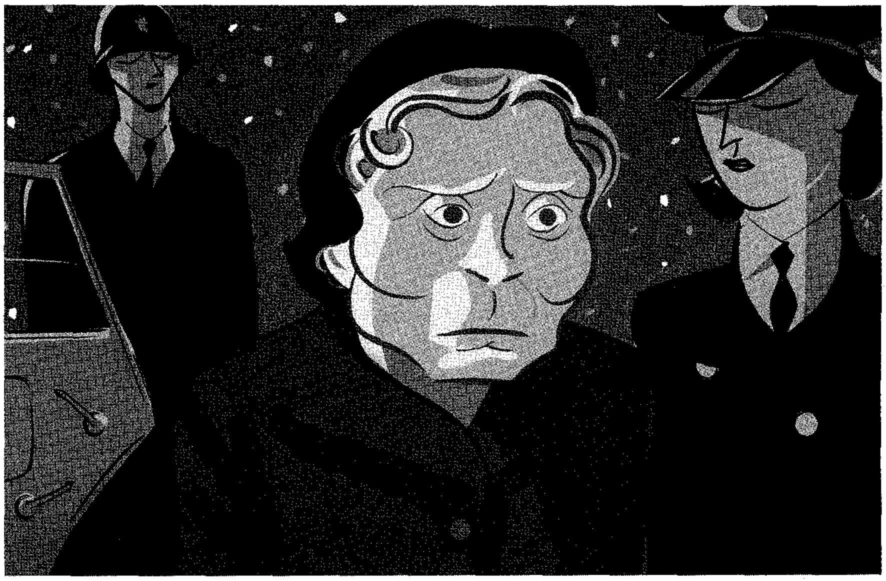
THE CURRENT CINEMA

PLAYING PARTS

"Vera Drake" and "Stage Beauty."

BY DAVID DENBY

The title character in Mike Leigh's "Vera Drake" is a radiant middle-aged cleaning lady (Imelda Staunton) who races through her London working-class neighborhood singing to herself. The time is 1950, and the city still suffers from wartime austerities; the sun, as if refusing its warmth to the lower classes, never seems to penetrate the narrow alleys and pinched little rooms. But Vera brings the light. A short, pudding-faced woman, she clambers up stairways and drops in on her invalid mother and other elderly people, staying just long enough to pull a blanket tighter, say a few words of sympathy, and get the water boiling for tea; then she makes her way to the houses of the wealthy, whose objets d'art and fireplace grilles she dusts and polishes, sometimes on her knees. At home, she is the center of a happy family: her husband, Stan (Phil Davis), a bluff, shrewd, decent man, delights in his wife's enormous competence, and their two grown children, who still live with them, depend on her for everything. Vera gives of herself freely and easily, and it is precisely in that selfless and attentive way—brisk, efficient, consoling—that she shows up in the flats of unhappy young women, and, using a rubber tube and a noxious solution, terminates one unwanted pregnancy after another. In between her regular jobs and visits, Vera is an amateur abortionist, performing an act that was illegal in Britain until 1967. Her work is usually effective—but one day something goes wrong, and a young woman nearly dies.



Imelda Staunton plays a cleaning lady with a mission in Mike Leigh's movie.

ERIC PALMA

"Vera Drake" is marvellous, though it is smaller in emotional range than such earlier Mike Leigh films as the goofy bourgeois satire "High Hopes" (1988), the candid and piercing "Secrets & Lies" (1996), and the splendid theatrical spectacle "Topsy-Turvy" (1999). The movie is all of a piece, and its discipline is part of its meaning. The cinematographer, Dick Pope, has taken the blue and red out of the color palette, and though the images are quite beautiful—a shot of two men going to work is a stunner—"Vera Drake," moment by moment, is an aesthetically harmonized rendering of a depressive, dun-colored London. What we see of the city feels stunted by inhibition and class restriction. Even the luxury of the upper-class houses is peculiarly heavy and hushed. The Drakes' cramped flat is enlivened by the people who inhabit it, but the Drakes, along with everyone else in the movie, go mute on the subject of sex. An upper-class girl who is impregnated by her violent, drunken lout of a boyfriend buys herself a medical abortion performed in a clinic, but she is stammering and dense about what happened to her. Vera's cringing daughter is equally inarticulate about her gentle romance with a nearly wordless chap who visits the house. The furtiveness of Vera's activity is part of the English sexual reticence and embarrassed dithering of the period. There is, however, one difference between Vera and the young women: she doesn't feel guilty about what she's doing. As she sees it, she's just helping out girls in trouble.

Leigh, who, at sixty-one, has long been active in theatre and television as well as in movies, is a master of portraiture. Before shooting, he works with his actors for weeks in an exhaustive ritual of improvisation and re-creation—a process that might, in other hands, produce nagging repetition (as it did in John Cassavetes's movies) or an overly analyzed, spiritually inert approach to acting. Leigh, however, knows how to fuse clarity with spontaneity; again and again, he achieves the illusion of everydayness. As far as we can see, he doesn't bully his actors. He lets them live in their roles, and something unprecedented and startling emerges—David Thewlis's tormented sexual aggressiveness in "Naked," Brenda Blethyn's amused outspokenness in "Secrets & Lies," the fruitful dyspepsia of Jim Broadbent's W. S. Gilbert in "Topsy-Turvy." It's more difficult, of course, to make goodness interesting, but Leigh manages it in "Vera Drake." Without sentiment or condescension, he brings to life the yeoman spirit of working-class England—the semi-articulate, stoical gravity of the men and women who survived the blitz and kept things going afterward. Vera's generosity, as Leigh presents it, is a product of her ceaseless energy.

Imelda Staunton, who is well known in England as a stage and TV actress, amazingly finds the lyrical element—the happily busy, thoughtless resilience—in cooking, cleaning, soothing, taking care of people. Staunton is always on the move, so it's a shock when the law comes down on Vera and she's suddenly paralyzed. After the police arrive at the Drake flat, Leigh gives Staunton one of those classic prolonged closeups, and Vera's sense that her entire life is about to change registers in the tiniest alterations in her facial muscles. In the duration of that closeup, we cross from meadow to tundra; it's a frightening journey to watch. From there on, as if the law were literally pressing on Vera's neck, Staunton is bent and winded. Although the police and the courts don't treat her cruelly, they are possessed of an almost Dickensian weight of pomp and severity. Internally, Vera feels that she has committed no crime, but her awe before the authorities is so great that she can't assert her innocence. We want her to stand up for women's rights, to insult the hypocrites among the barristers and judges—men who would quickly pay for an abortion if one of their daughters got pregnant. But she remains nearly silent. The working-class respectability under whose protection she has operated—and that Leigh has portrayed with so much love and generous attention—crushes her; she can't be defiant. Leigh adds only one bit of rhetorical heightening—some choral music on the soundtrack. What we hear is not the "Hallelujah" chorus or anything like it. The passages are more a fading, wordless sigh, but they let us know unmistakably that someone great has walked those streets and climbed those stairs.

The Restoration London of "Stage Beauty" is as roistering, appetitive, and noisy as the fifties London of "Vera Drake" is becalmed and repressed. This coarse-grained movie is about the period in the sixteen-sixties just after Charles II climbed onto the throne. Ending the Puritan interregnum, Charles immediately reopened the theatres, which still featured men in all the female roles. In "Stage Beauty," Billy Crudup, with a slender waist, long lashes, and a bit of a flirtatious pucker, is Ned Kynaston, the reigning Desdemona, Ophelia, and Juliet of the day. The men in the audience, many of them wearing wigs and barrel bloomers (they're almost in drag themselves), go mad for Kynaston; the women are titillated and entertained. When Charles (Rupert Everett), eager for excitement, rules that men may no longer play women, Kynaston, whose lover and protector is the Duke of Buckingham (Ben Chaplin), is out of a job; he is replaced by his dresser, Maria (Claire Danes), who becomes the first English actress to play Desdemona. Crudup stretches himself as Kynaston, but you feel sorry for him. Offstage, people are always pulling up Ned's gown and reaching for his member to see if he's really a man; Maria loves him and climbs into bed with him, which leads to much coy and uneasy tussling over the issue of whether Ned is playing the part of a "man" or a "woman" in the sack. Second-rate bawdiness—that is, bawdiness without the wit of Boccaccio or Shakespeare or even Tom Stoppard—is more infantile than funny, and I'm not sure that the American playwright Jeffrey Hatcher, who concocted this piece for the stage and then adapted it into a movie, is even second-rate.

"Stage Beauty" might be called the spawn of "Shakespeare in Love," and, unfortunately, this is a "Shakespeare" that lacks the graceful spirit and breathless narrative drive of its progenitor. Not that "Stage Beauty" is static. The movie was directed by Richard Eyre, who, famous for his many theatre productions here and in England, must have been worried that someone would say he was deficient in cinematic skills, because he sends the camera racing in and out of theatres and up and down streets in pointless dynamism. And he lays on the farce too heavily. He fatally indulges Rupert Everett, who turns Charles—one of the most feverishly hetero kings in the history of royal scandal—into an epicene theatre lover who can't stop play-acting himself. Everett's work has become slovenly and self-amused and almost menacing, and young Zoë Tapper, flouncing on and off the sets in her décolletage, is embarrassing as Charles's loose-tongued mistress Nell Gwynn. With these two running the court, it may be no wonder that everyone takes liberties (the actors talk back to the King as if he were an innkeeper). It's a shame, because the movie is not without brains. Crudup, who plays Desdemona with a soft voice and stylized gestures—a swivelling wrist, a swaying neck—is touching as the sexually confused Kynaston, and it's funny that when Danes's Maria begins playing Desdemona she imitates Ned's Kabuki-style femininity and can't do the role convincingly. What's not so funny is that Ned, playing Othello at last, "becomes a man" by violently throwing Maria around the set. "Stage Beauty" mixes daring and conventionality in ways that never jell. ♦

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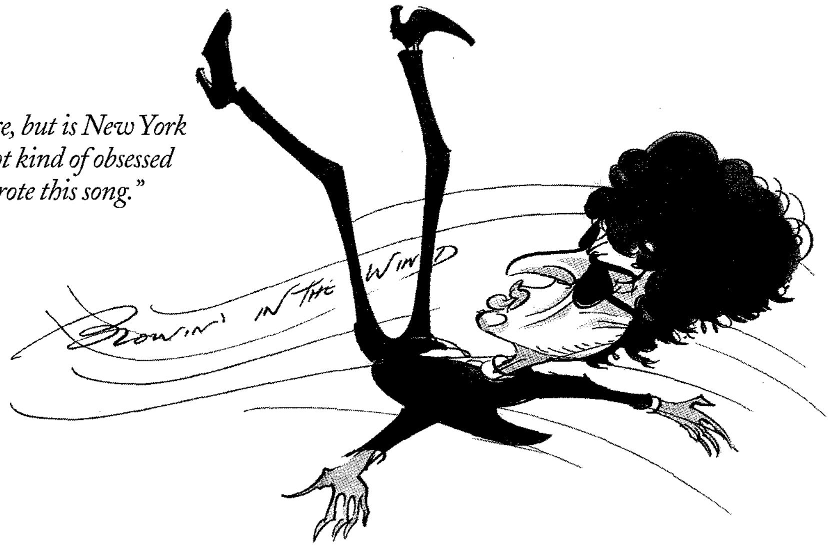
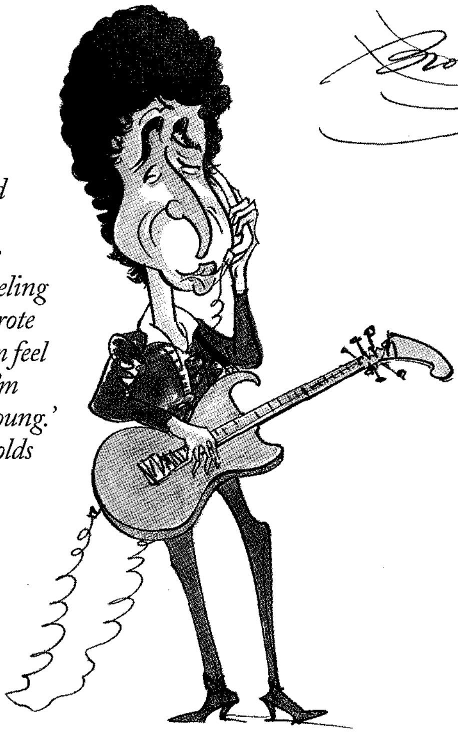
"The world was absurd. . . . I had very little in common with and knew even less about a generation I was supposed to be the voice of."
—*Bob Dylan, in his memoir "Chronicles, Volume 1."*

"Blowin' in the Wind"

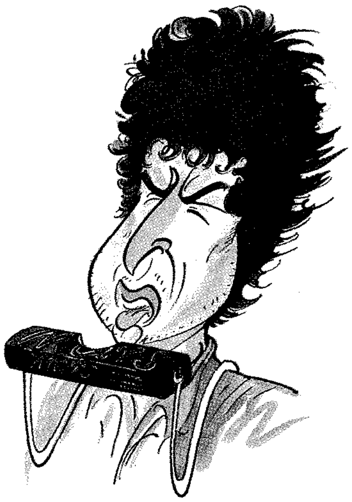
"They call Chicago the Windy City, sure, but is New York any less windy? Or San Francisco? I got kind of obsessed with the question, and that's when I wrote this song."





"Forever Young"

"I knew a guy named Evan Young. I was talking to him on the phone, and he was feeling kind of down, so I wrote this song to make him feel better. That's what I'm singing: 'for Evan Young.' But then Burt Reynolds convinced me that 'Forever Young' was a more universal sentiment. I think he was right, but, boy, was Evan Young pissed off."



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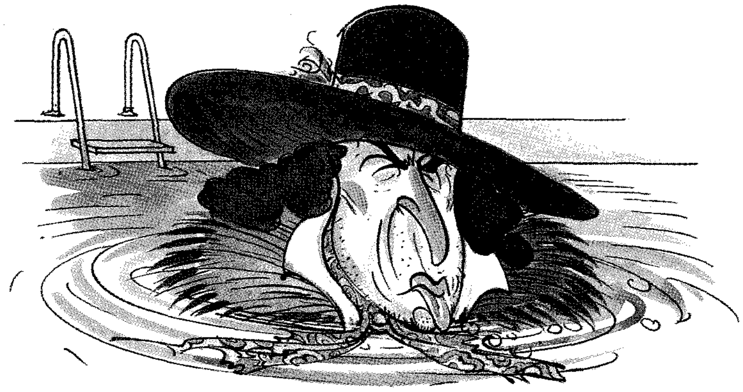
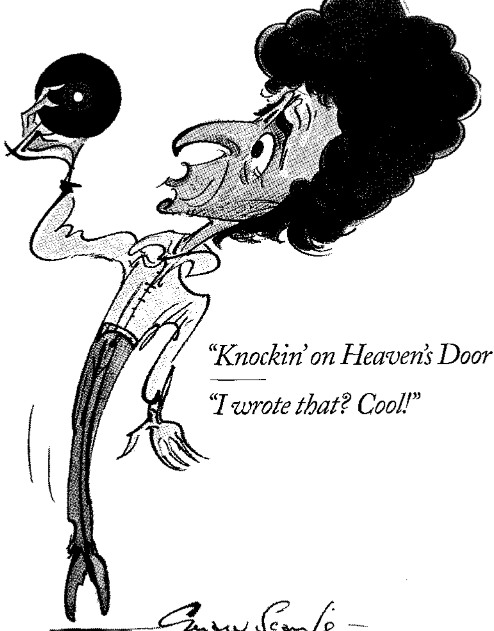


"Tears of Rage"

"Have you ever tried to put in an indoor swimming pool? I kept having trouble with the contractors, the zoning. I can't tell you how frustrating it was. Nothing else that happened in the sixties bugged me more than that freakin' pool."



"Knockin' on Heaven's Door"

"I wrote that? Cool!"

Gerald Scarfe

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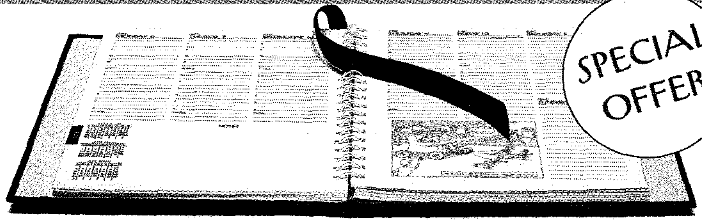

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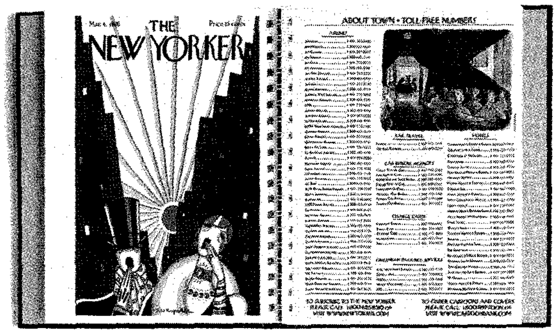
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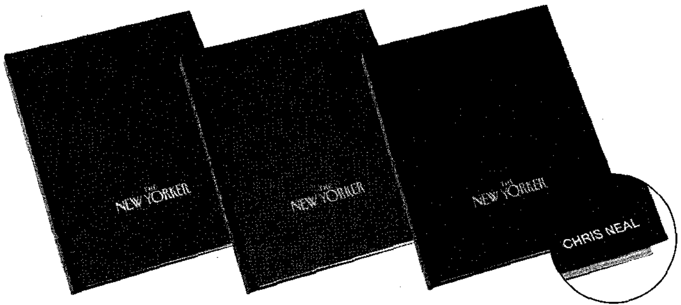
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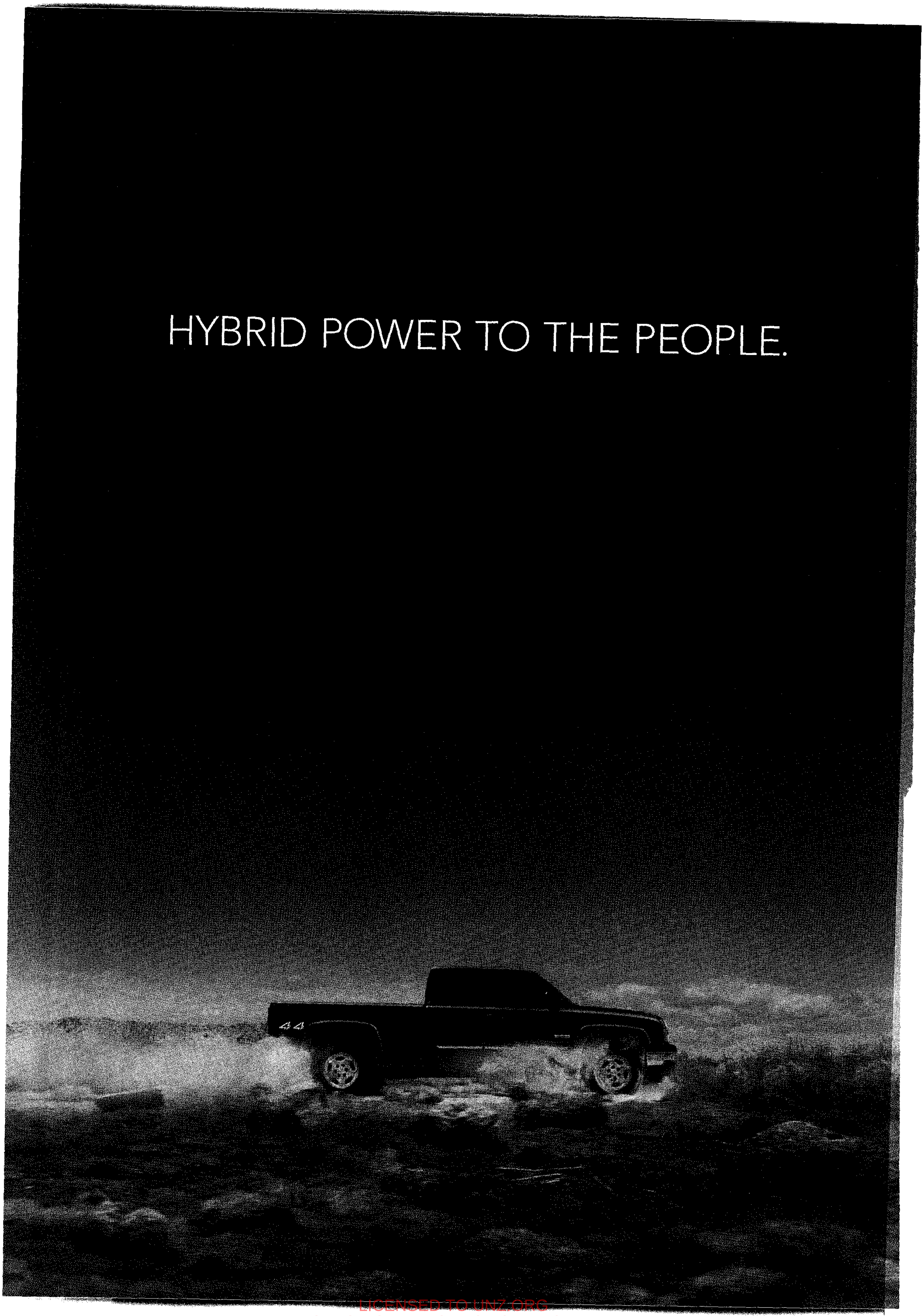
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